Creating
stylized girls

Freelance illustrator Sabrina Miramon
shares her playful artwork and techniques

PAINT THE PERFECT PIN-UP!
Step-by-step guide

Editor's Letter

JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to *2dartist* issue 112!

Welcome to issue 112 of 2dartist! In this month's issue you'll find stunning imagery and brilliant ways to get sketching and painting characters. Sabrina Miramon shares her process of painting a themed pin-up girl, as well as an exclusive interview. We learn how to sketch a believable character with Brun Croes and explore dynamic characters with Hugo Richard!

With a host of helpful tutorials, stunning artwork and useful advice, we hope this issue has everything you need to be inspired and creative this month. Enjoy!

Contributors
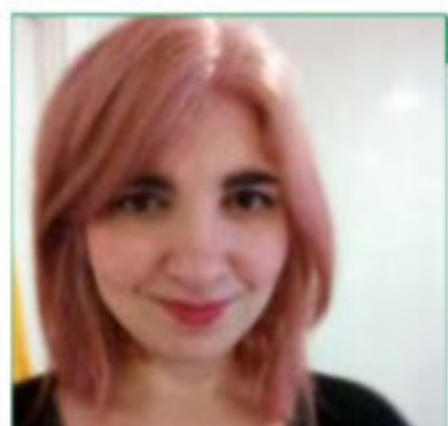
SABRINA MIRAMON
Sabrina Miramon is a freelance illustrator currently working on backgrounds for animated series and board game illustrations. She shares her process for painting a themed pin-up girl.


HUGO RICHARD
Hugo Richard is a professional artist with two years of experience in the games and animated movies industry. He is currently working at an animation studio doing backgrounds.

PEDRO LOPES
Pedro is a professional concept artist from Portugal, with five years of experience in various indie game companies. Right now, he's working as a freelancer and trying to improve himself.
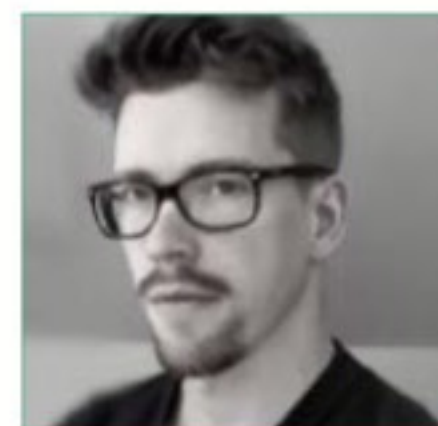
BRUN CROES
Brun Croes is a freelance illustrator working in the animation, games and entertainment industry. He's been active as a professional for four years focusing mainly on visual development.

MIKHAIL RAKHMATULLIN
Mikhail Rakhmatullin is a freelance concept artist from Russia. He has worked in the game industry for about six years and is very happy with it. He reveals the techniques behind his textured image.

DAVID HABBEN
David Habben is an illustrator and fine artist based in Salt Lake City, Utah. He has provided illustrations, storyboards, and concept art for a wide variety of clients in publishing and advertising.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUBMIT TO 2DARTIST?
We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, writers and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: **jess@3dtotal.com**.
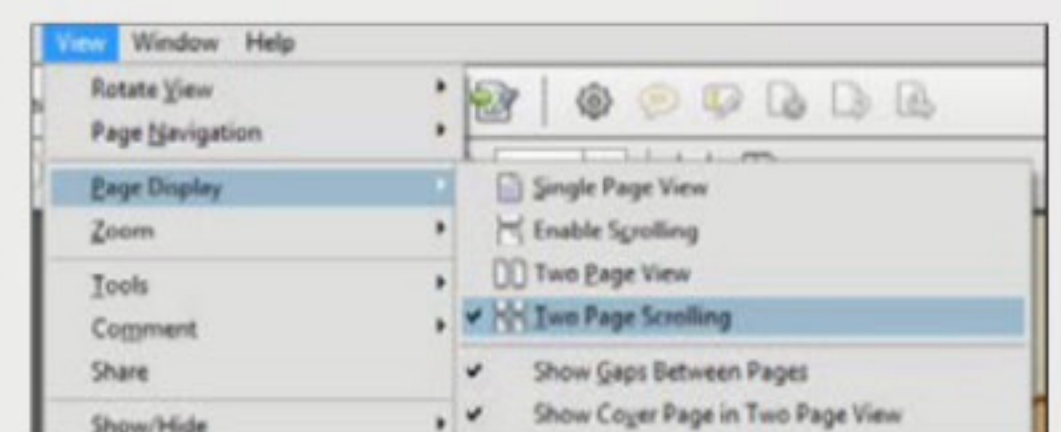
Your Magazine.
Get the most out of it!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page Display**;
3. Select **Two Page Scrolling**, making sure that **Show Cover Page in Two Page View** is also selected.

Jump to articles

In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

Download resources

Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to click it to download <u>free</u> resources to accompany that article!

FREE RESOURCES

For lots more tutorials and exclusive articles, visit
www.layerpaint.com

2dartist magazine is available as a downloadable PDF magazine. If you have an iPad or iPhone, you can drag your magazine into your iTunes library – it will automatically add the PDF to your bookshelf in your iBooks app!

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To date, 2dartist has hired over 400
freelancers. We would like that to continue...

Help us to beat piracy.

Since 2006, 2dartist has hired over 400 freelancers to create new and exclusive artwork and tutorials to share with its loyal readers. These artists are just like you: they earn a living by creating art and educational content, and we would like to continue to support these talents for as long as possible.

If you're reading this magazine and you haven't paid for it, please buy your own copy here. It's only £2.99 / $4.85 US and your contribution will help 2dartist to become a stronger brand and offer even more freelance opportunities to the digital art community.

Thank you,

2dartist

Download the free trial at www.lightwave3d.com

Italian digital artist Lorenzo Zitta knows how to create thought provoking still images with LightWave 11.6. Whether the still is computer-generated with LightWave, an artful arrangement of digital photos, or a combination of the two, the composition of the scene – with its attention to detail and unusual merging of objects – demands a closer look.

"Thanks to LightWave, I can quickly test many different approaches for my projects. I love bringing models into Layout and switching on Radiosity, then start working on shading and lighting, bringing in more elements, and testing and improvising to get the look I want." - Lorenzo Zitta.

LightWave® 11.6

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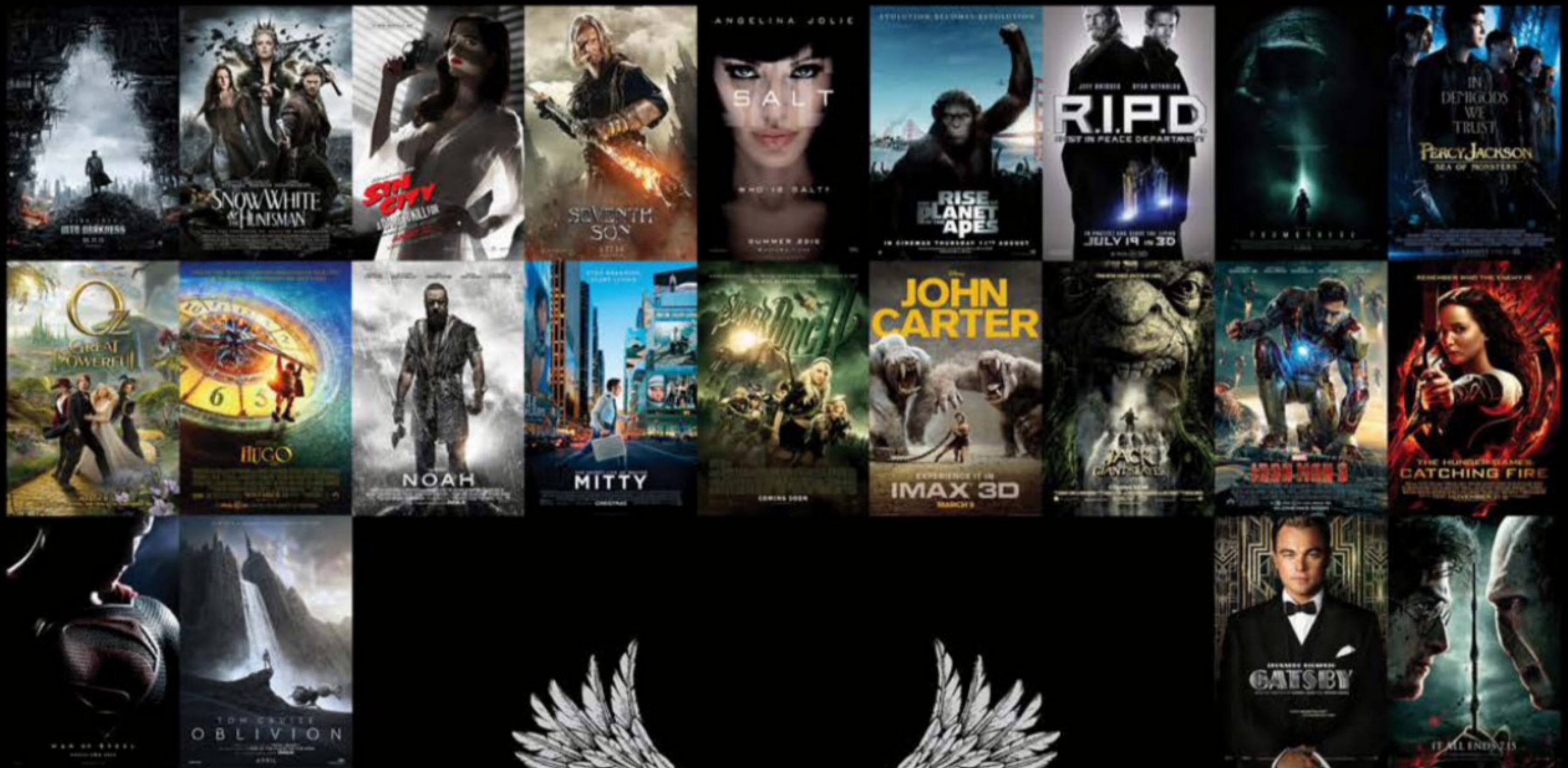
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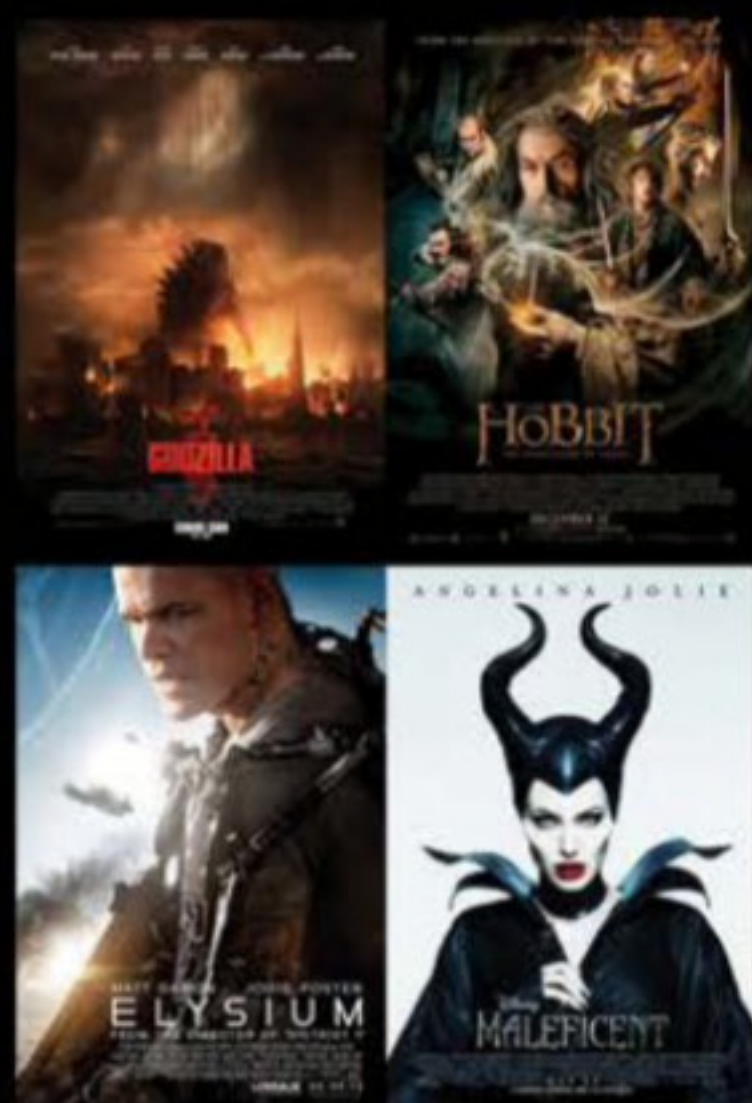
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A selection of our Alumni's achievements, congratulations to them all.

The Artist
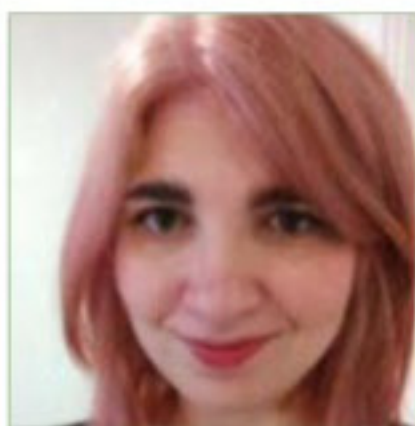
Sabrina Miramon
mioum.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Sabrina Miramon is a freelance illustrator, currently working on board games and in the animation industry.

Creating stylized girls

Sabrina Miramon loves to paint girls and describes her style as "cartoony-stylized-colorful-roundish." We talk to Sabrina about how she found her way into digital art and what inspires her ▶

Sabrina Miramon is a wonderful self-taught CG artist and colorist from Lille, France. She decided it was time to follow her dream and begin a career in digital art when she turned 20. "I decided to give it a shot as I didn't like the industry I was in and the path I was taking," she says. "I knew I couldn't take years and years of doing the same thing, and that I wanted to work in a more creative field."

When Sabrina isn't painting colorful, playful girls, she is working on illustrations for board games and backgrounds for an animated series.

2dartist: What was it about the digital tools that made you want to pursue a career in the industry?

Sabrina Miramon: The kicker for me was browsing digital art forums and artist portfolios online. I was amazed at what people could do with only their tablet and software. I wanted to do the same things, so I decided to start drawing and learning Photoshop. I was really, really terrible, but you have to start somewhere!

2da: As a self-taught artist what resources did you find useful when learning?

SM: I didn't get a classical training, so for me the best way to learn was to look at a lot of art, go to dedicated websites, go to museums, read about art, and get comments and critics from other artists. Try to find inspiration and subjects that matter to you. Don't be afraid of failing, and don't give up. ▶

● **Self portrait** © Sabrina Miramon
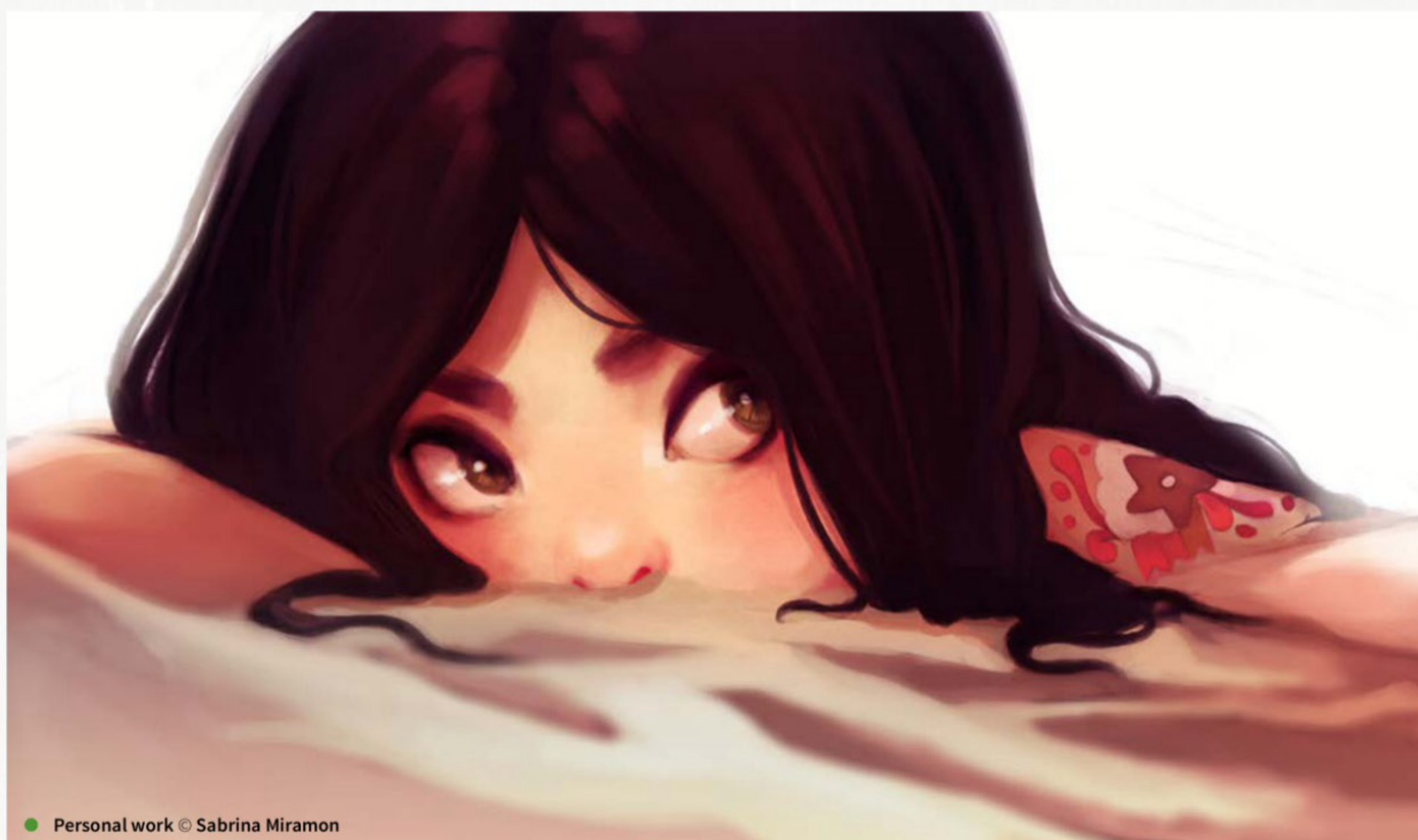
● **Personal work** © Sabrina Miramon

"Most of my personal work is a way for me to relax, so I admit I usually stay in my comfort zone"

2da: What is your favorite subject to paint and why?

SM: If you look at my portfolio, it's pretty obvious. Girls! Women are such a beautiful subject. Of all sizes and shapes. Most of my personal work is a way for me to relax, so I admit I usually stay in my comfort zone. But painting girls comes easy to me. Professionally I have a much larger range of skills, and I'm learning every day.

🕐 Artist Timeline Sabrina's career so far

2004: Graduated from 3D school

2006: After working two years in FX for TV and advertisement, she decided it wasn't what she wanted to do

2006: Began drawing seriously and got her first job in the videogame industry
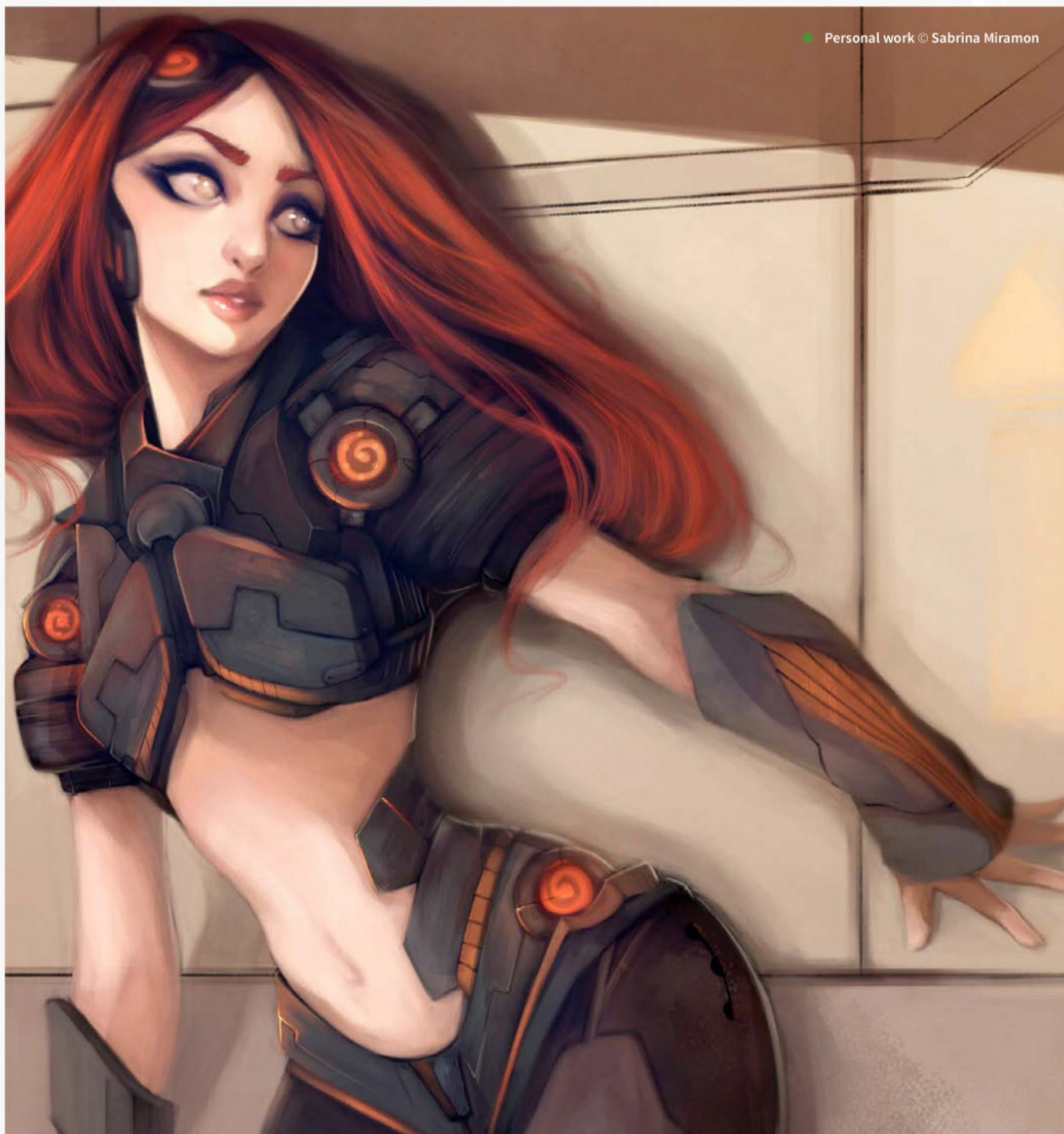
2007: In the same company, switched from videogame to animation projects

2012: Went freelance full-time

Personal work © Sabrina Miramon

2da: Can you talk us through your typical workflow?

SM: I always start with doodling, for characters or backgrounds. When something catches my eye, I try to refine the sketch a little bit, even if it's not perfect, because I always end up painting over it and correcting mistakes as I go along. I do a quick color composition, on a separate layer, to see which direction I want to take. Then paint until I'm satisfied with the result.

2da: How would you describe your style and what inspires you?

SM: Oh, I never really thought about describing it. I would say my style is sort of cartoony-stylized-colorful-roundish. What inspires me are videogames, movies and art. Anything art related really, from classical painters to contemporary concept artists. I spend hours browsing other people's work online.

> ## "Keep learning and keep working – every day! It's hard; it takes time and dedication, like any other skill"

2da: What has been your favorite project to work on and why?

SM: That's a hard one. I can't think of one in particular, I've learned so much from all the projects I've worked on. I love the one I'm currently working on, but as it's NDA I can't tell you anything about it. I love illustrating board games, it's really fun.

2da: What do you like to do away from the pressures of deadlines?

SM: I usually enjoy painting my own things and working on my own projects, but also relaxing. Sometimes I end up playing far too much of a videogame, or watching movies and catching up on TV shows. I'm not a good example.

2da: If you had one piece of advice for aspiring digital artists, what would it be?

SM: Keep learning and keep working – every day! It's hard; it takes time and dedication, like any other skill. If you aren't happy with what you've done, it's normal. Don't be afraid to start over if you're stuck. Don't hesitate to ask for advice.

2da: What can we expect to see from you in the very near future?

SM: A lot more hopefully! Some personal projects, more studies, more illustrations and more girls. A tabletop game I illustrated just got released last month, and I'm working on a new one in a couple of months. It's a pretty busy year for me, and I'm really enjoying myself! ●

HUGO RICHARD

Sketchbook

Hugo Richard's character sketches combine gesture lines full of movement and a keen eye for detailed costume. We take a look through his collection of traditional and Photoshop sketches and works in progress

The Artist

Hugo Richard
artstation.com/artist/
hugo-richard

Hugo Richard is a professional artist with two years of experience in the games and animated movies industry. He is currently working at an animation studio doing backgrounds.

Discover Hugo Richard's cool character sketches...

I can't live without it. I go everywhere with my sketchbook because lots of things can inspire me to create something. I really enjoy doing some digital sketches as well and in this article I will show you how I build up some of my characters and what kind of stuff I usually do to improve my drawing skills.

Inspiration and ideas

Music is great at inspiring the creation of a character or composition in my sketchbook for my future work. Also, some really great artists are a source of inspiration to me, such as Wes Burt, Mike Azevedo, Miles Johnston and João Ruas. Most of the time I try to sketch subjects that are appealing to me, such as girls with a great look, monsters, weird creatures and medieval stuff.

Materials

I really like to use mechanical pencils to sketch my characters and I use a Pilot G-Tec-C4 to create design stuff and some characters as well.

Sketching techniques

To start a sketch I usually try to think about what I want to draw, and I put the first ideas on paper as quickly as I can. During this process I will usually think about the poses and compositions as well. After that stage, I can start to sketch the final character with all of my ideas and sketches that I made beforehand.

Don't forget that drawing a character is not just getting lines down – I mean, you need to know where this character comes from, the history behind him or her and how that can reflect on the look and feel. Also, the costume is very important. Use as many references as you can to make your character really interesting. It's usually better to research first, before drawing just for the sake of doing something random.

01 A personal project called 'Old Friends' that Hugo is currently working on

02 Just sketching with some friends

01

03

① ② ③

03 Another character for the 'Old Friends' project (one of Hugo's favorites)

04

04 Full process of one of Hugo's characters

05 A character completed for a character design class in Brazil

06 Just trying to create some characters for a fight game. There are many more unfinished ideas in Hugo's sketchbook

06

GABIS

07 Hugo's lunchtime drawings at his studio

08 Drawing gestures must be a common habit for everyone - Hugo thinks it's a useful way to improve drawing and anatomy skills

09

2dartist

Would you like to see your sketches featured in 2dartist magazine?

We're always on the lookout for talented artists and their artwork to adorn the pages of our magazine. If you think you have what it takes, get in touch!

To submit, simply email Jess at **jess@3dtotal.com** with a selection of your images or a link to your portfolio online, plus a little information about you.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sketch WORKSHOP

★

An innovative and fun way for people of all ages to find the inspiration to pick up a pencil – and draw!

The Sketch Workshop incorporates a luxury leather-style folder that can securely hold a workbook and up to 20 quality drawing tools. We've created a number of workbooks that cover popular topics including:

ANATOMY

CHARACTERS

CITYSCAPES

CREATURES

ROBOTS & SPACESHIPS

Designed to be easy to carry and use on the move, this beautiful art resource offers a complete sketching solution for beginners, hobbyists, and artists looking to brush up on drawing skills, with tuition by pro artists.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE FOLDER, WORKBOOKS, AND DRAWING TOOLS AVAILABLE, PLEASE VISIT:
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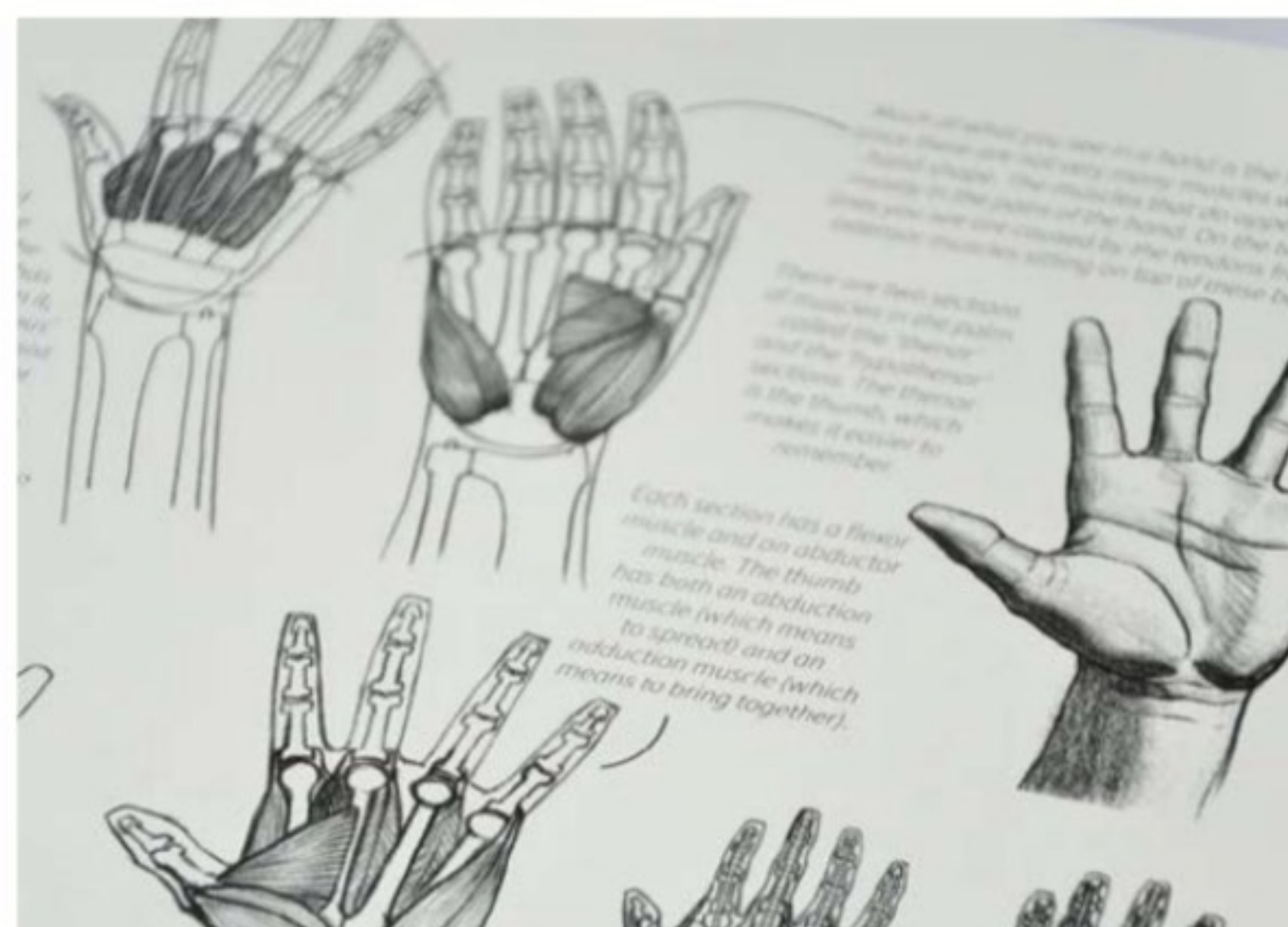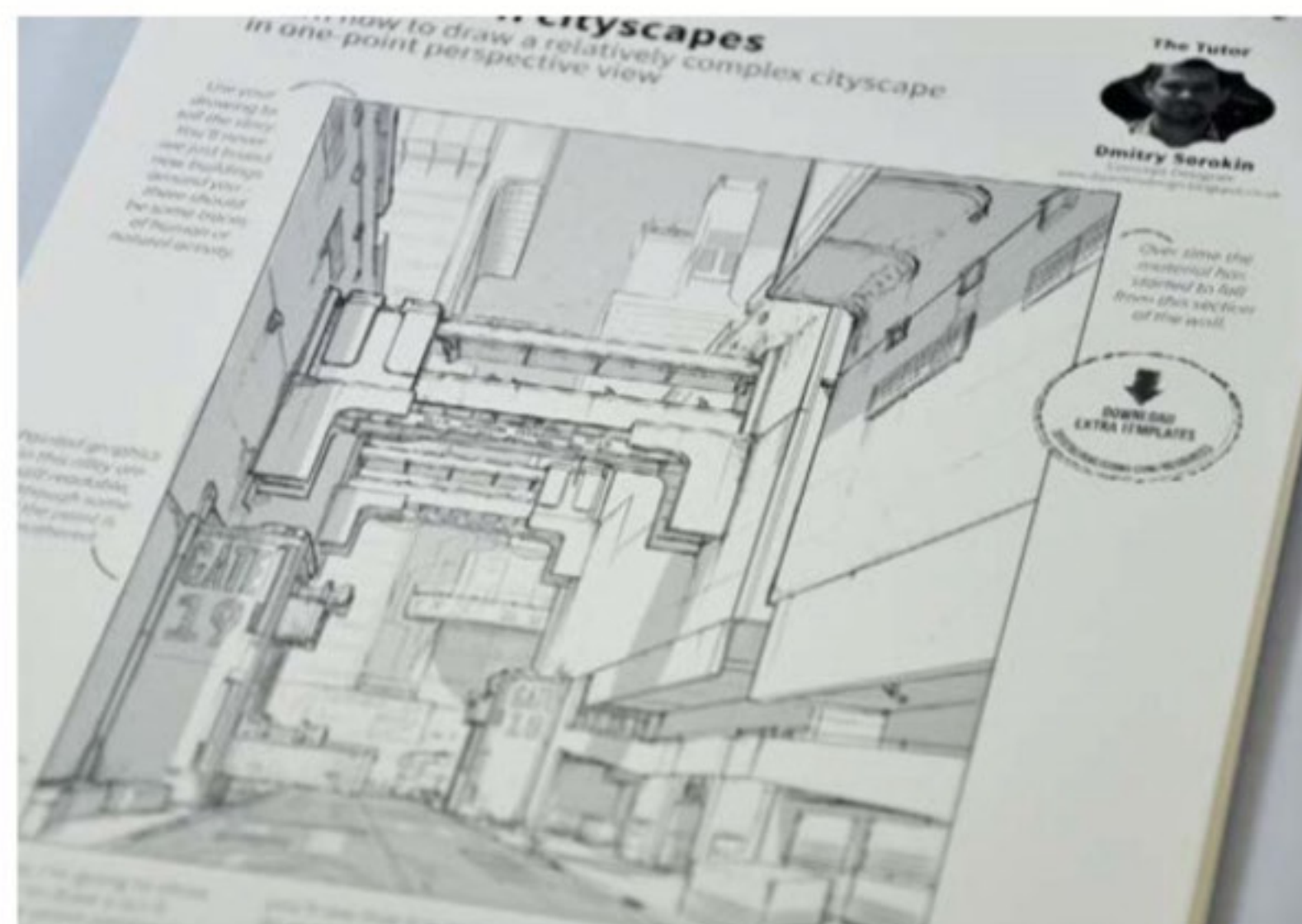
Art **Gallery**

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!

Weyland Yutani's shuttle failed to escape from LV-426
Benoit Godde
Year created: 2015
Web: porte-voix.com
© Benoit Godde

Aura
René Aigner
Year created: 2014
Web: rene-aigner.de

Portrait of Kaweh
Ali Kiani Amin
Year created: 2015
Web: facebook.com/ali.kianiamin

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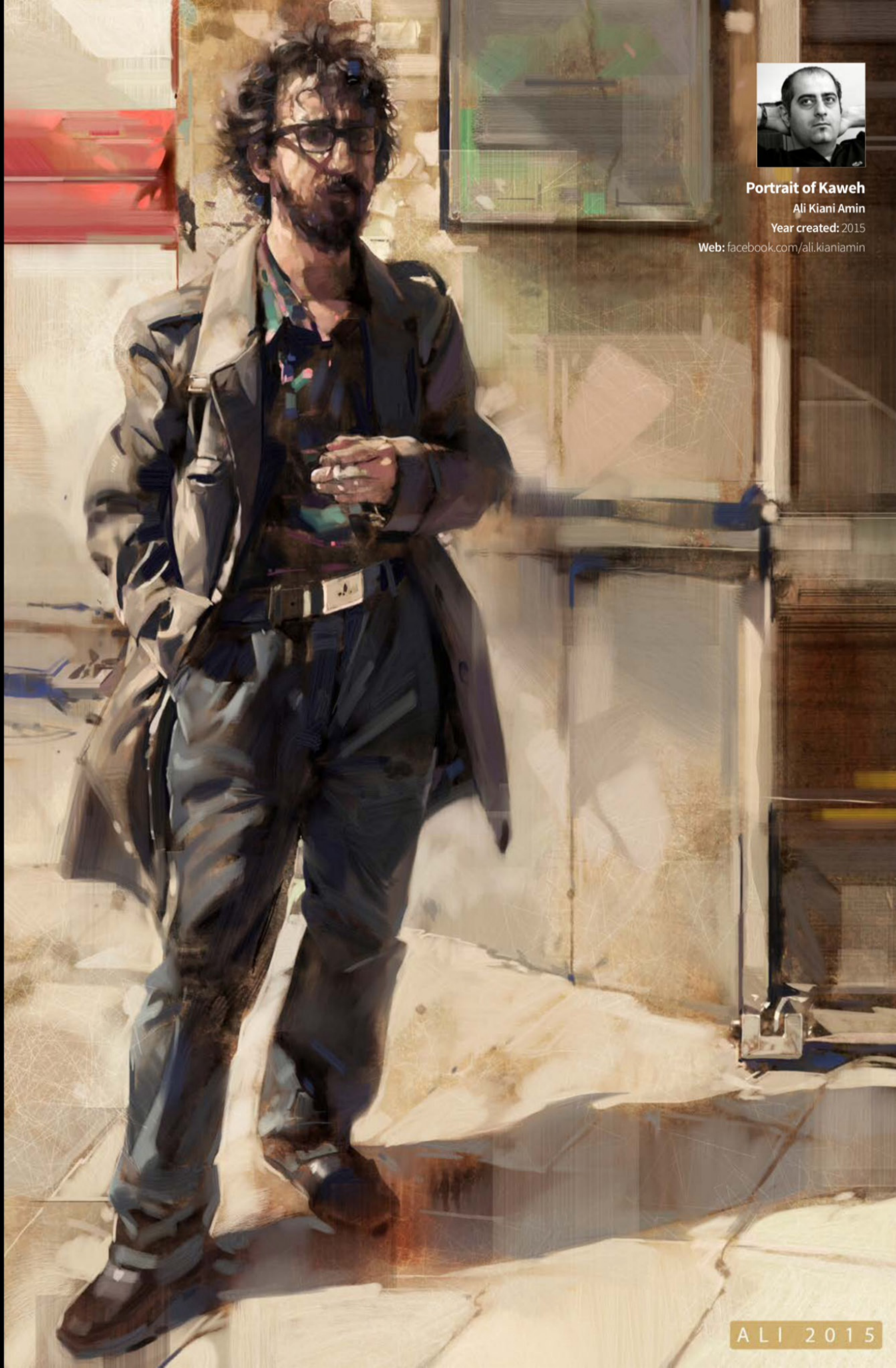
Lonely Lakeview Tavern
Marco Gorlei
Year created: 2015
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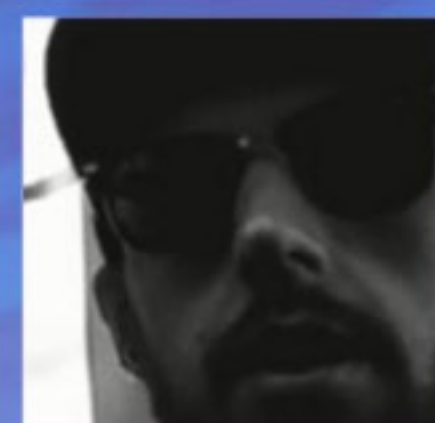
Virtual Plein Air
Michal Lisowski
Year created: 2015
Web: michallisowski.com
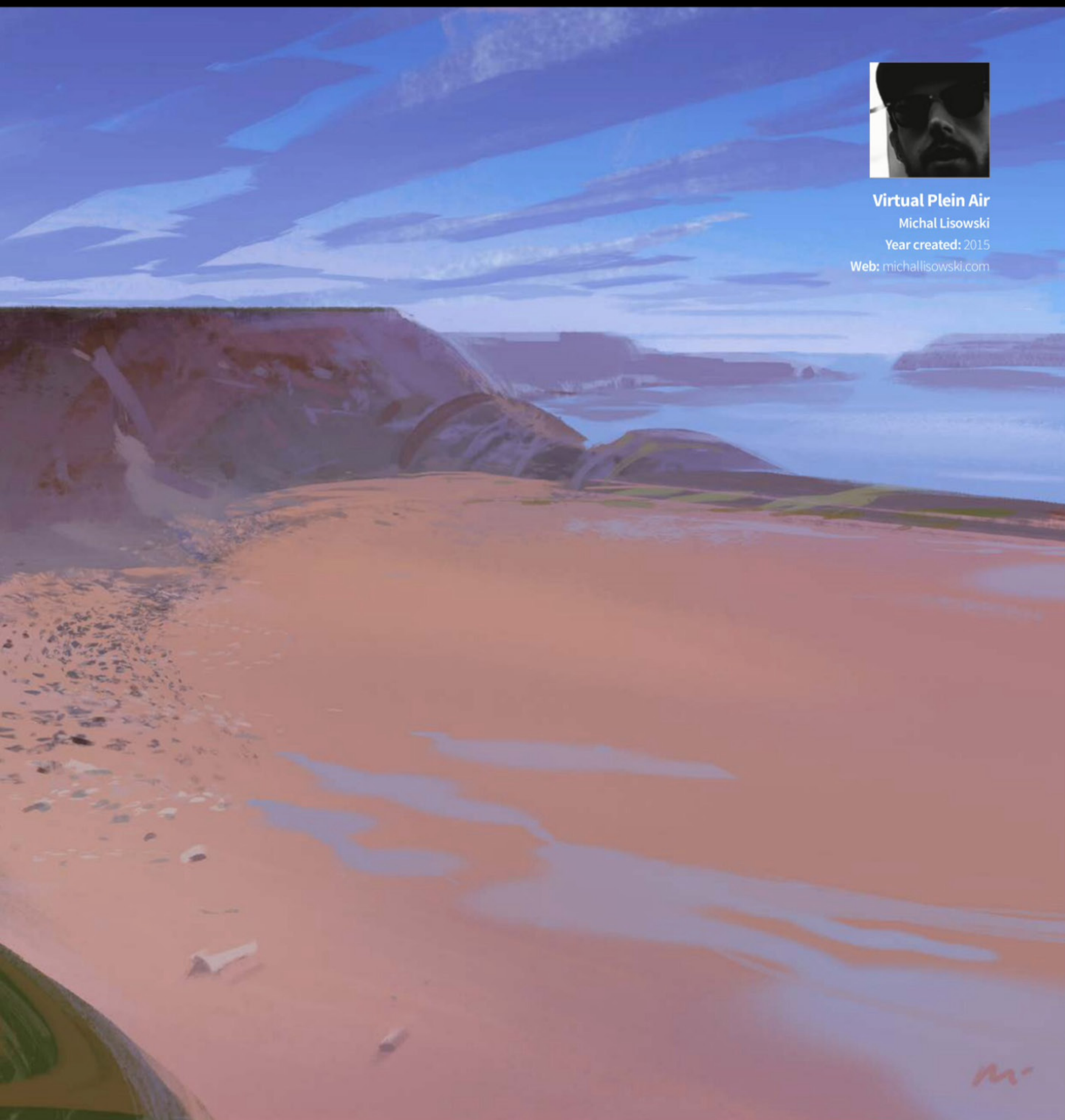
Le retour
Florian Aupetit
Year created: 2014
Web: florianaupetit.tumblr.com
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LE RE

TOUR

Naypyidaw
Oscar Gregeborn
Year created: 2014
Web: oscargregeborndesign.com

Fantasy Village
Steve Chinhsuan Wang
Year created: 2015
Web: stevechw.com

A cosy place for space travellers
Leon Tukker
Year created: 2015
Web: tryingtofly.deviantart.com

willmurai.com

The Artist

Sabrina Miramon
mioum.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Sabrina Miramon is a freelance illustrator, currently working on board games and in the animation industry.

Paint the perfect pin-up

Discover top tips and techniques for painting a cheeky pin-up! Sabrina Miramon leads you through her process of designing and painting a WW2 land girl pin-up, from concepting the pose and creating volume and form, to choosing a color palette ▶

Discover top tips and techniques for painting the perfect pin-up...

The subject of this tutorial is a pin-up in the style of the amazing land girls from World War 2. I'll be focusing mainly on the character, and I think it's a good idea in this case to make a simple background and exaggerate the curves. The process I'm explaining here will be quite simple and straightforward. The most important part I think is having fun doing something you enjoy!

01 Research and thumbnails: After doing
a little bit of research on the subject of WW2 land girls, I scribble down a few ideas, focusing on the general shape of the character. I quickly use a basic gray color to make the silhouette stand out more, so I can figure out the composition better.

02 Refine the sketch: Once I decide which
rough is better, I rework it, at a bigger resolution. I focus a little bit more on the details by drawing the outfit – overalls-cum-jumpsuit, something to fit the pin-up style. I try not to spend a lot of time on the sketch, as I will only be using it as a guide to paint over.

03 Start blocking in colors: I start by
blocking in some basic colors. A simple background will do the trick here, since the subject is land girls, I want to focus on more earthy tones for the whole picture, while keeping it bright and colorful. For this I just create a new layer underneath the sketch layer and, using a basic brush, start blocking in the colors. ▶

---

01 Quick research and idea generation

02 The messy base sketch

03 Blocking in the rough base colors

⚡ **PRO TIP**
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Save often
Technology isn't always reliable, so save often and different versions if you're unsure and want to go back to a previous step.

01

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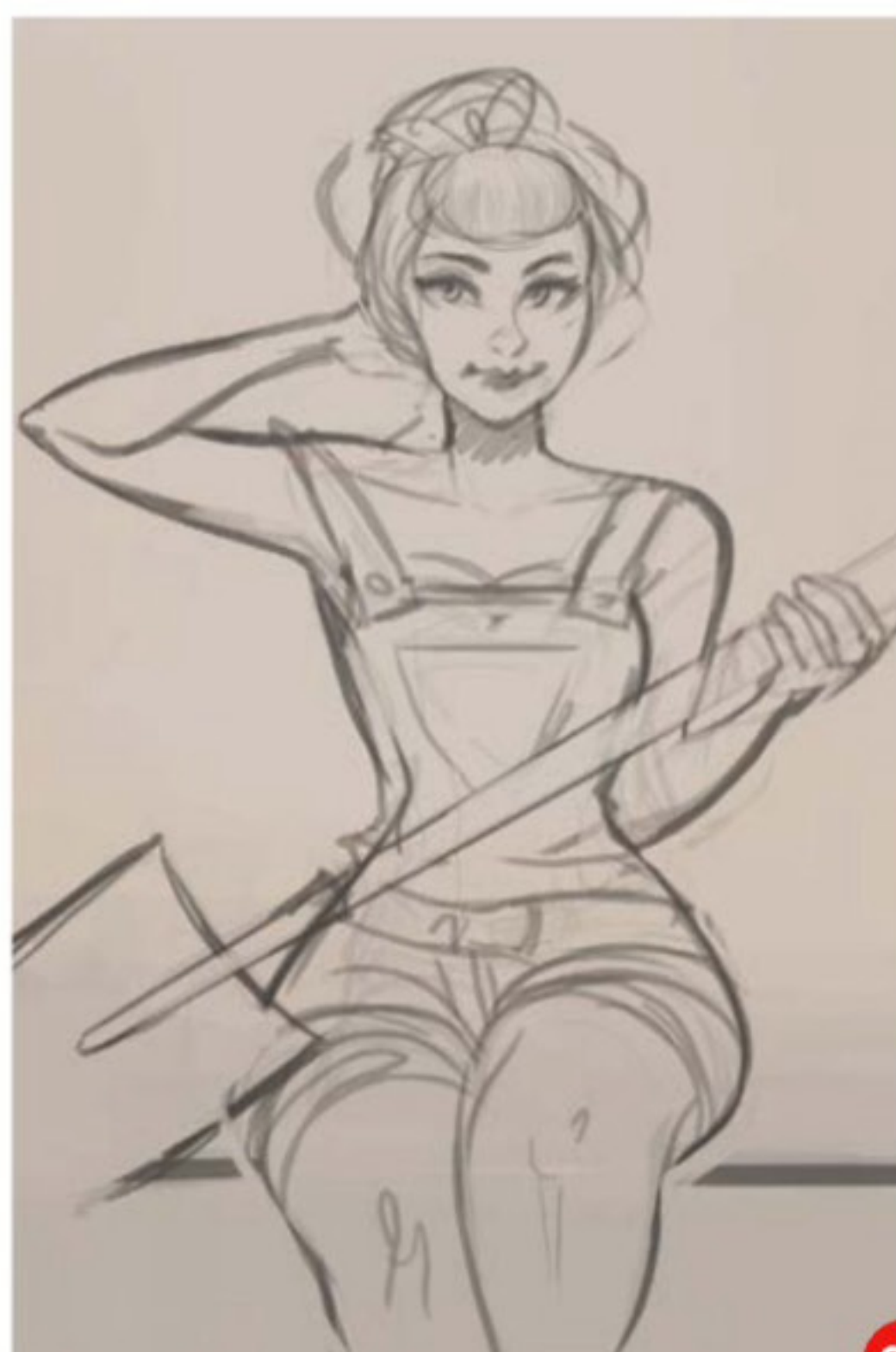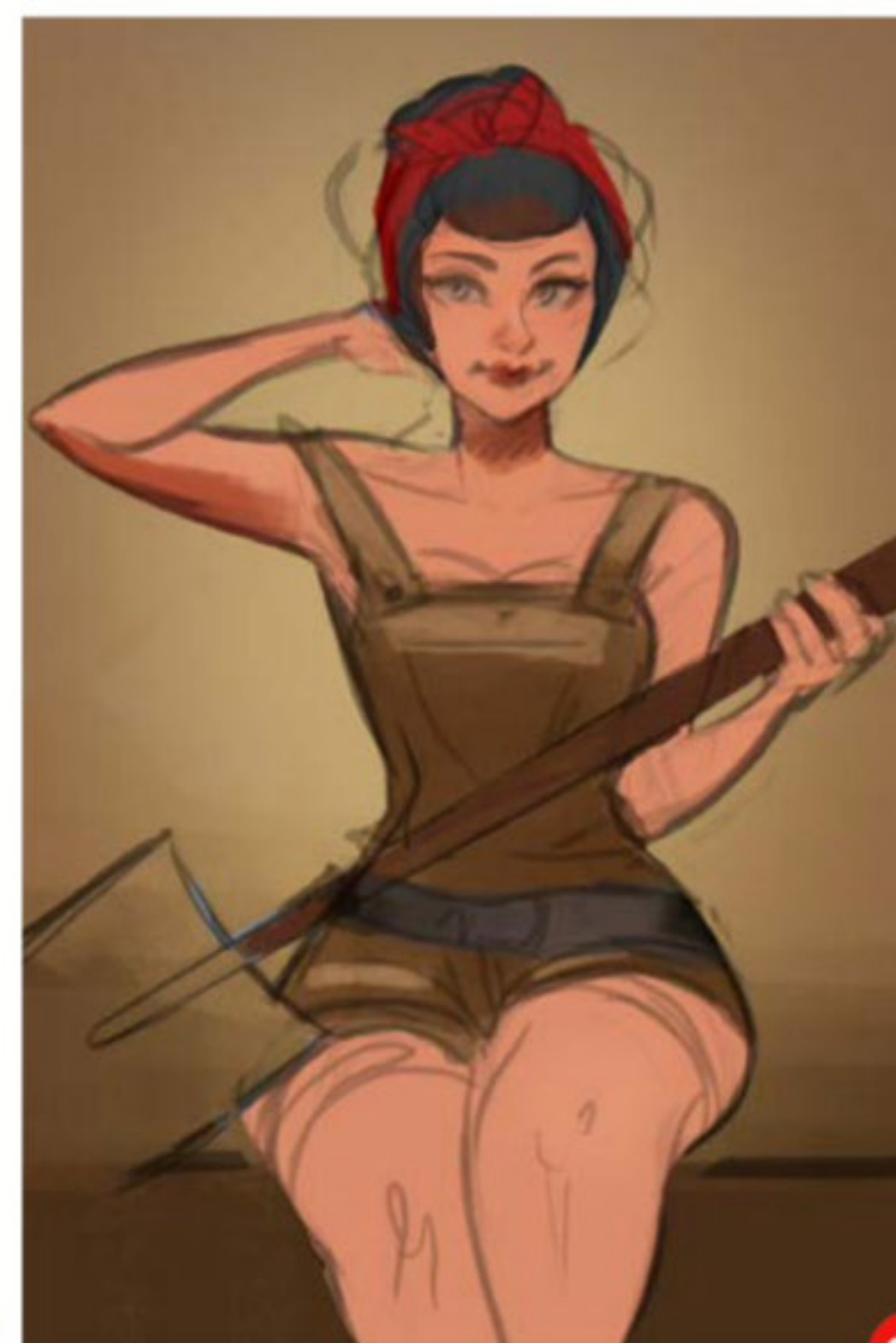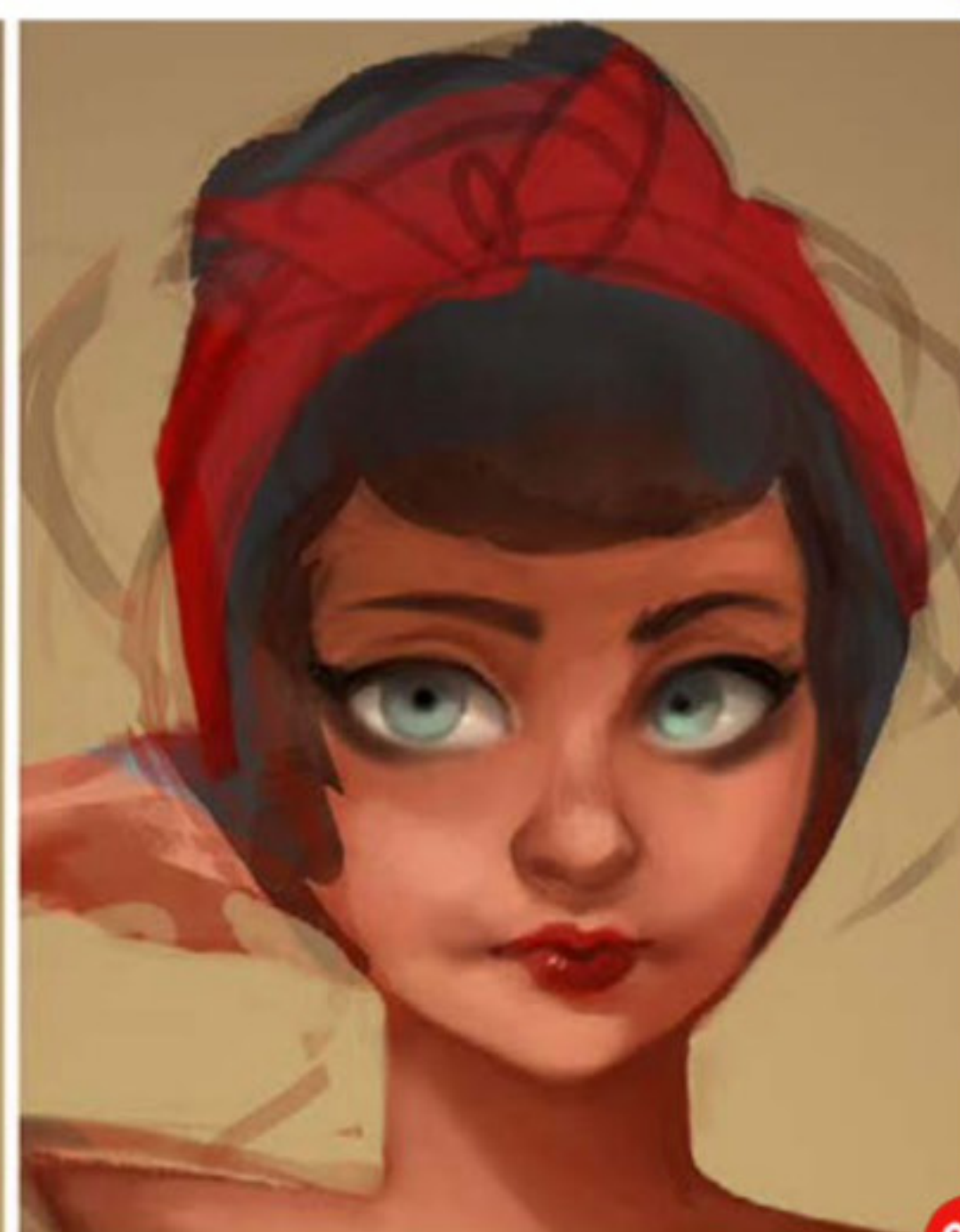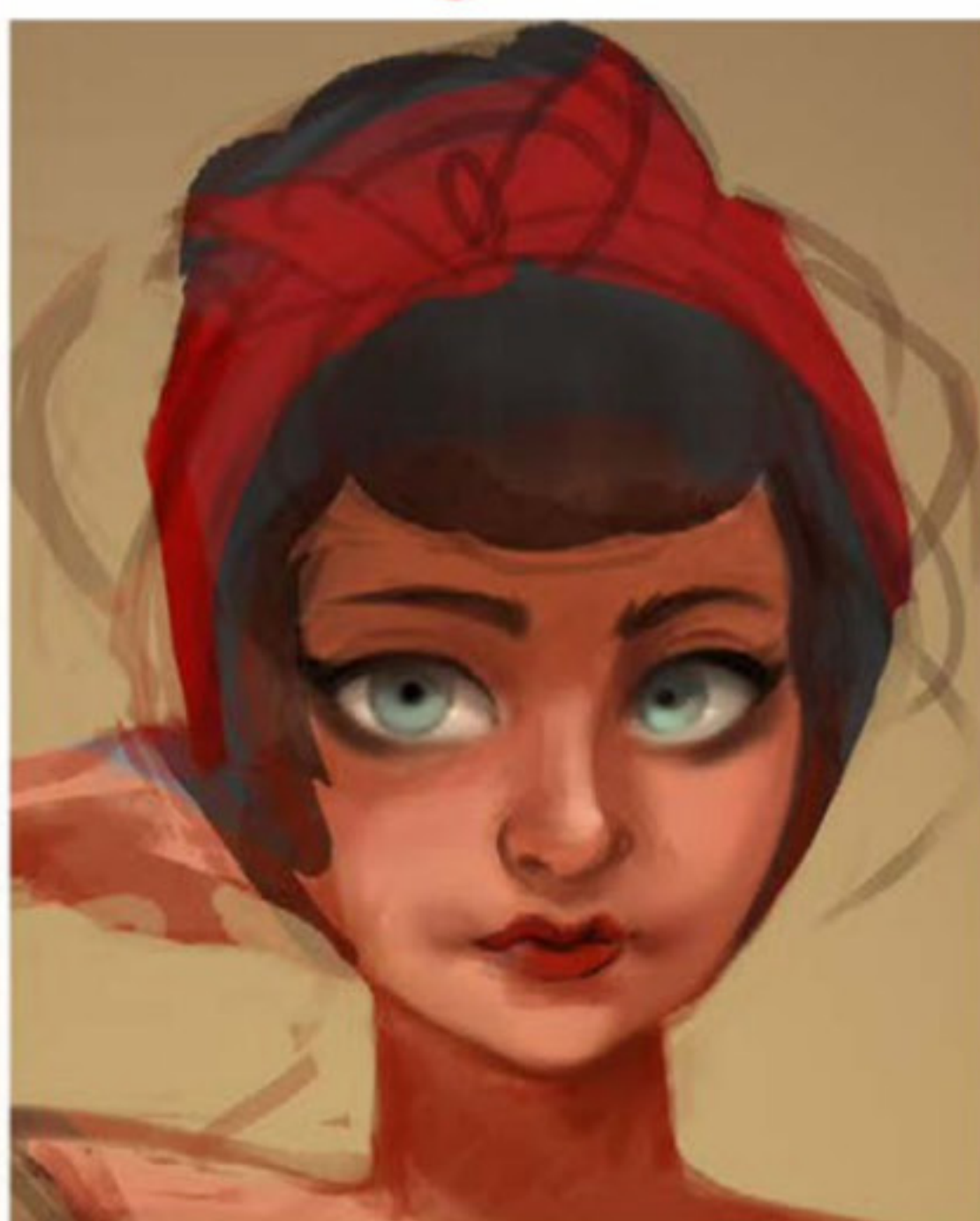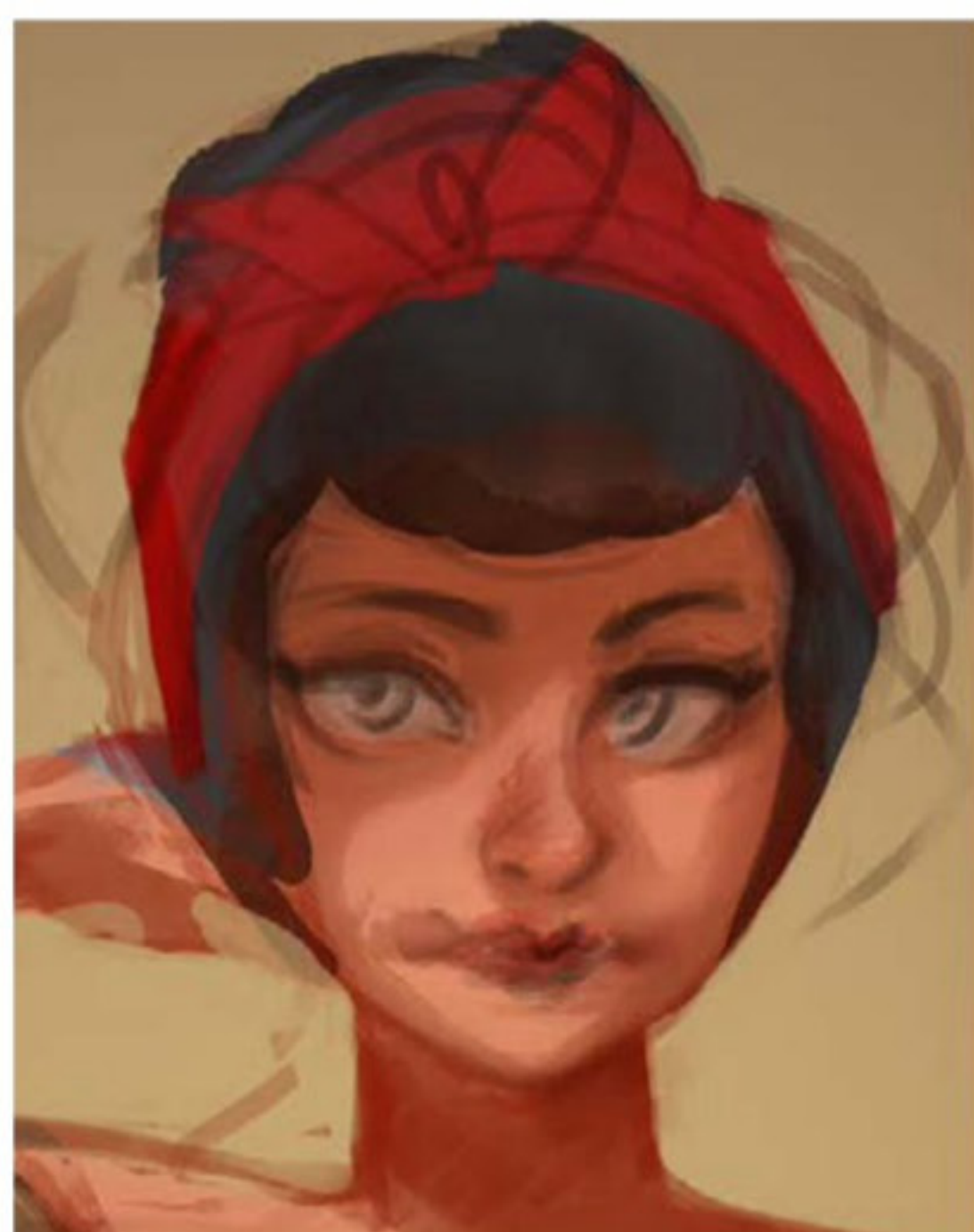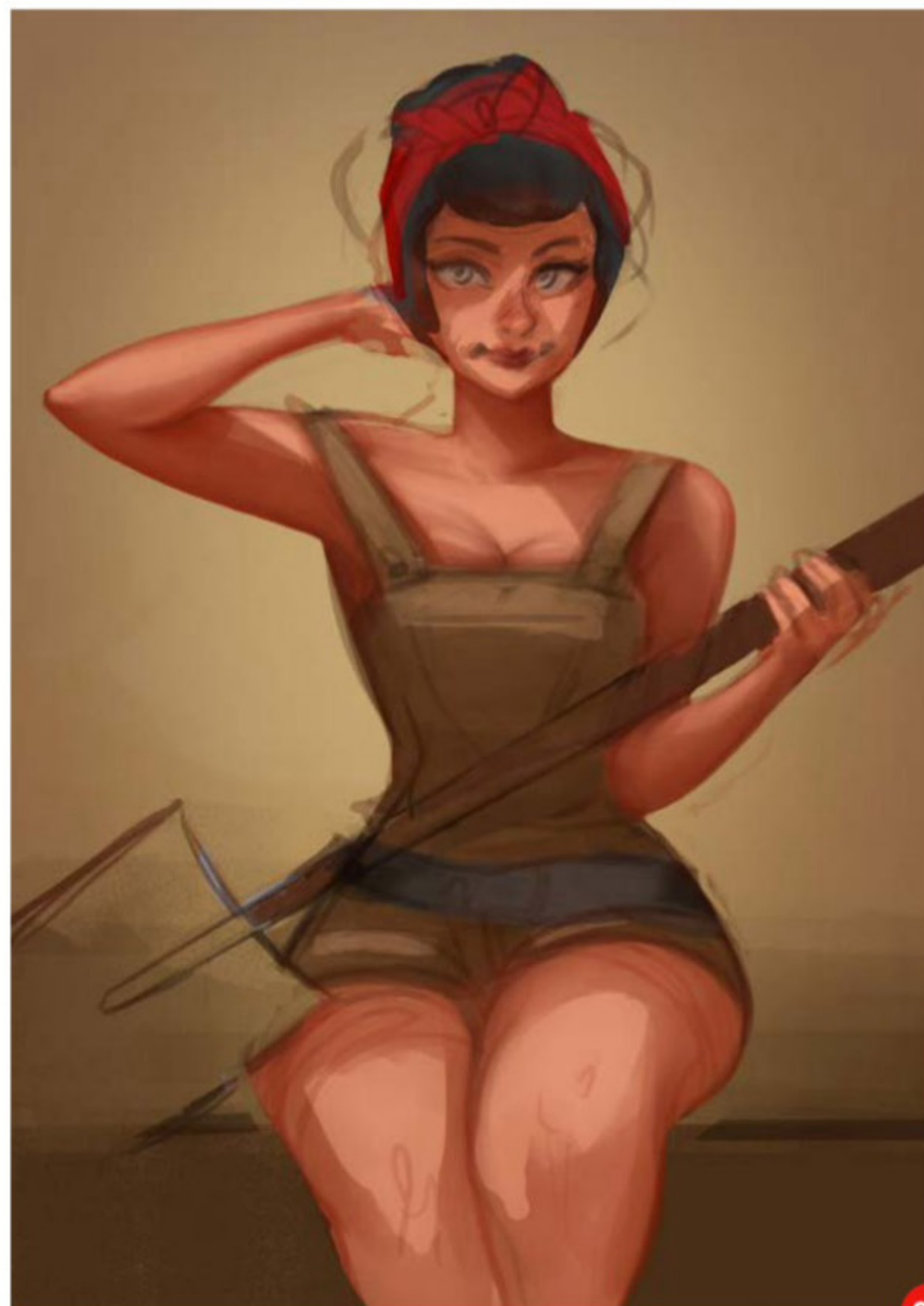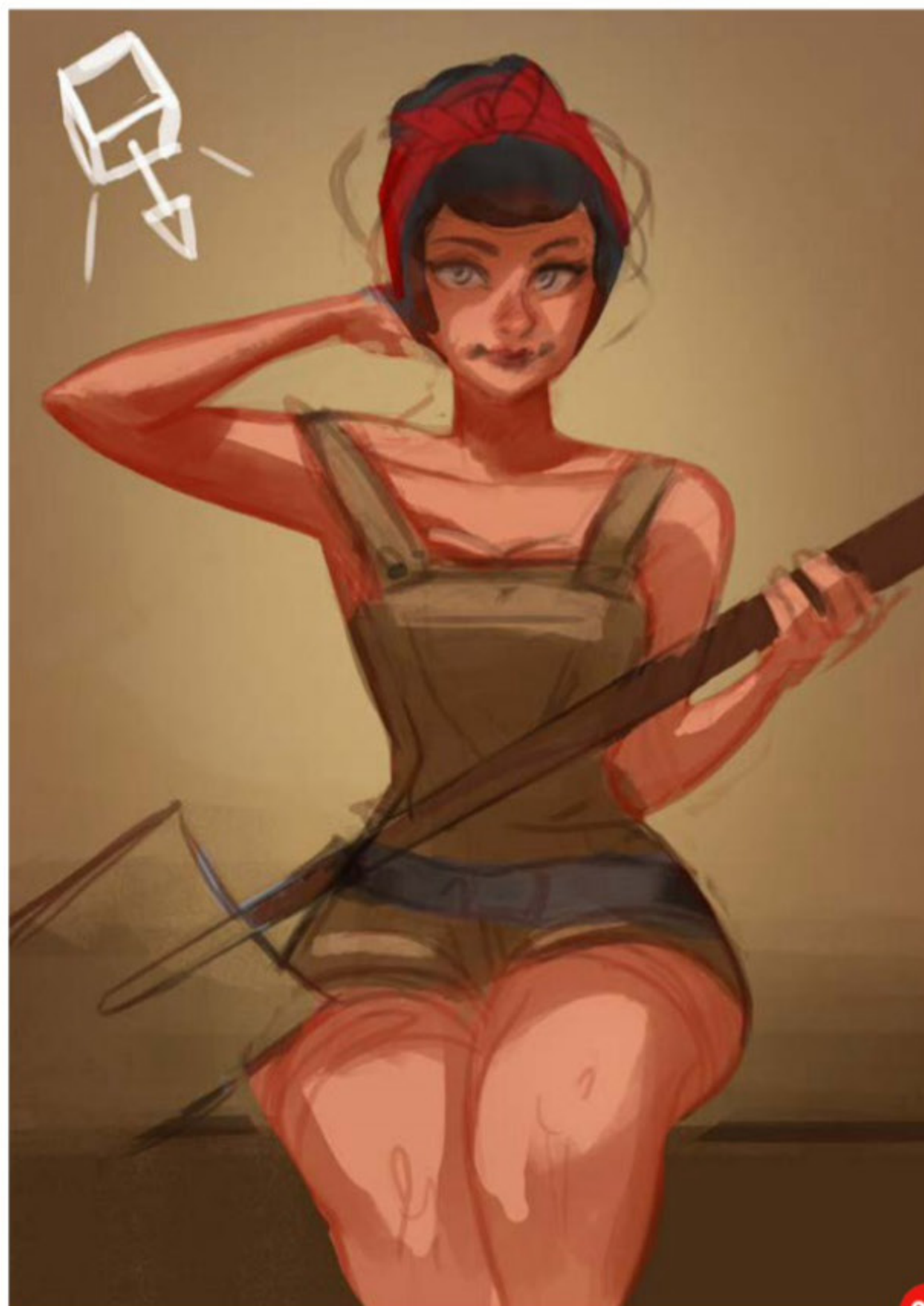
04 **Set up your light source:** At this point I decide where the light source will come from. I start by painting in the shadows. I pick a darker shade and begin to define the volumes by painting them on a separate layer. For this I use a basic brush set to 70-80% opacity. I also decide to color the sketch by using the Lock Transparent Pixel option on the sketch layer. By using this option, I will only color on top of the already existing pixels, so that the transparency is protected and preserved.

05 **Shading:** I start focusing on the lighting and shading by blending the colors. I'm focusing on an overall light and shadow pass. To achieve the appearance of smoother blending, use a low opacity brush. I do this until I get a decent color base.

06 **Refine the face:** I start to gradually add details to the face, by zooming in the area. I work on specific elements such as the eyes, nose and mouth with a smaller brush.

I realize that she looks way too sad for a pin-up, so I change her smile to give her a cheekier look. If you're unsure of something, don't hesitate to erase and repaint. ▶

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04 **Adding in volume**

05 **Start the rough shading**

06 **Working on the face**
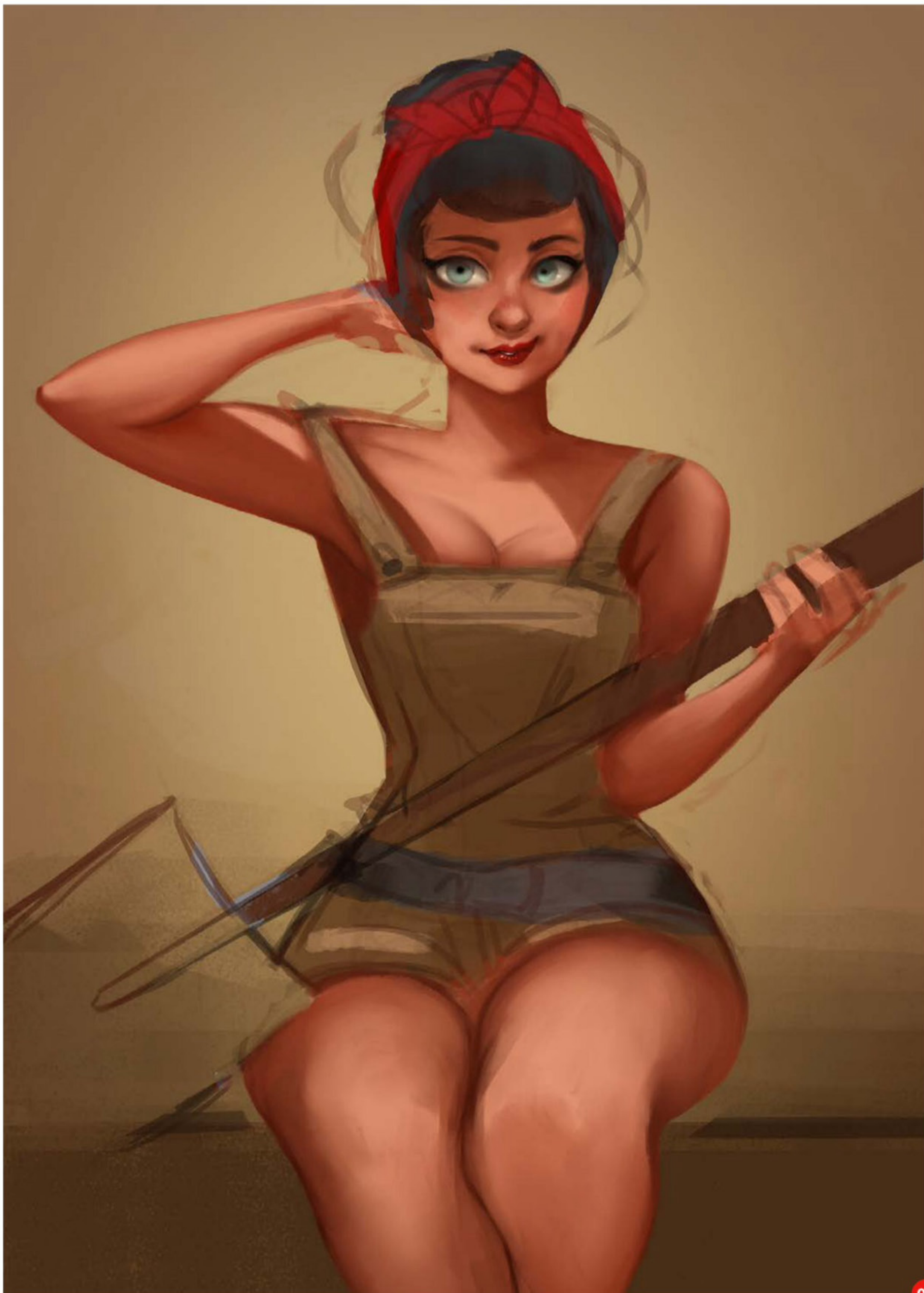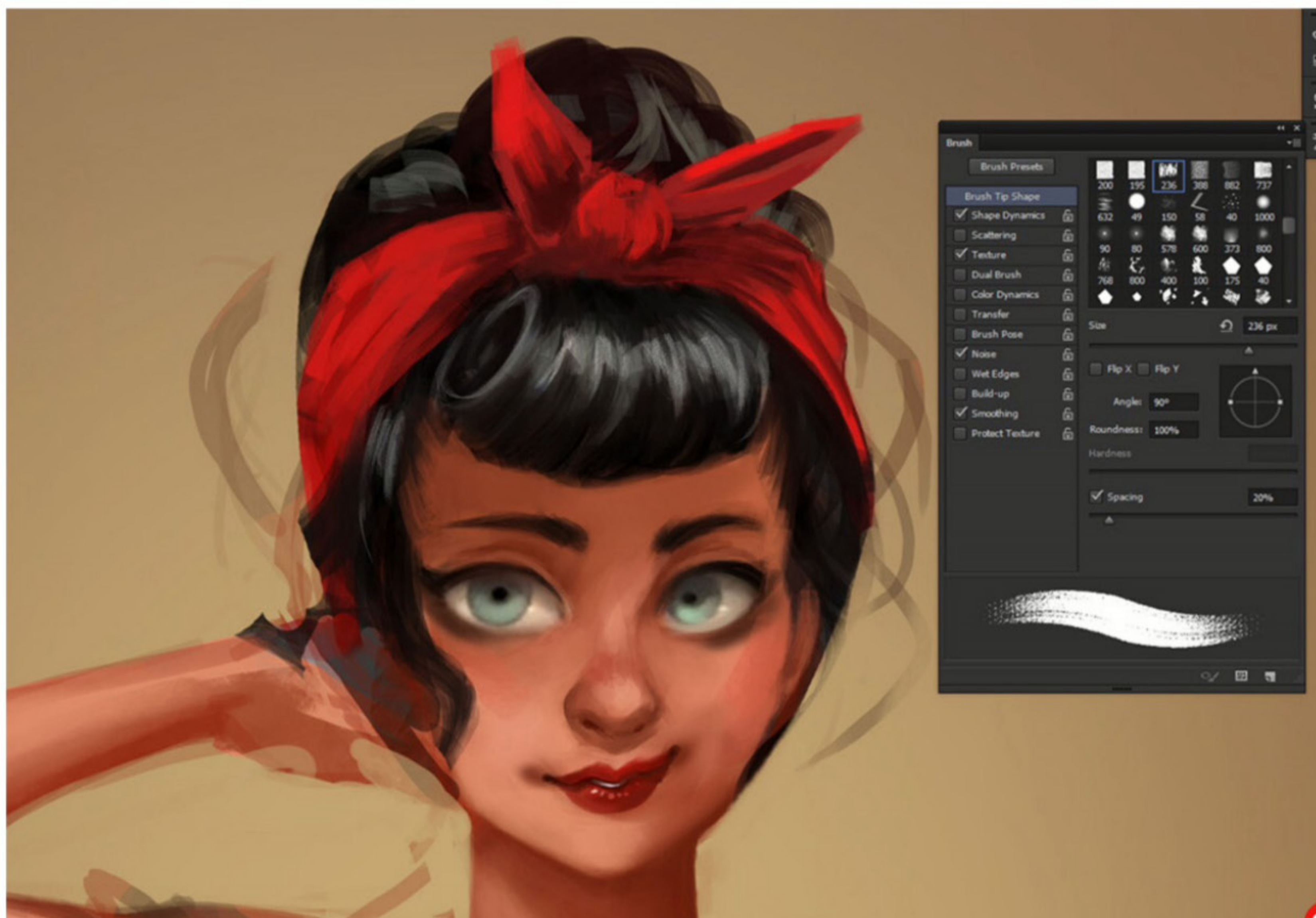
08

⚡ **PRO TIP**
....

Flip your image

By flipping your image (Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal) you can always spot mistakes and things that are a little off. It's an easy way to find out what needs correcting.

07 **Skin blend:** By using a Soft brush and reducing the opacity to 40%, I gently paint and blend the skin colors together. I add red and warm colors to give a little bit of a blush effect. I use a harder brush for the skin where sharp edges are present to define the contour of the body.

08 **Shaping the hair:** I choose a dark color for the hair so the face stands out more. I use a slightly textured brush and start adding in highlights to give a sense of volume to the hair. It is then pinned into a victory roll at the front and a messy bun at the back.

09 **Fix the hands:** Like a lot of artists, I'm dreading when it comes to painting in
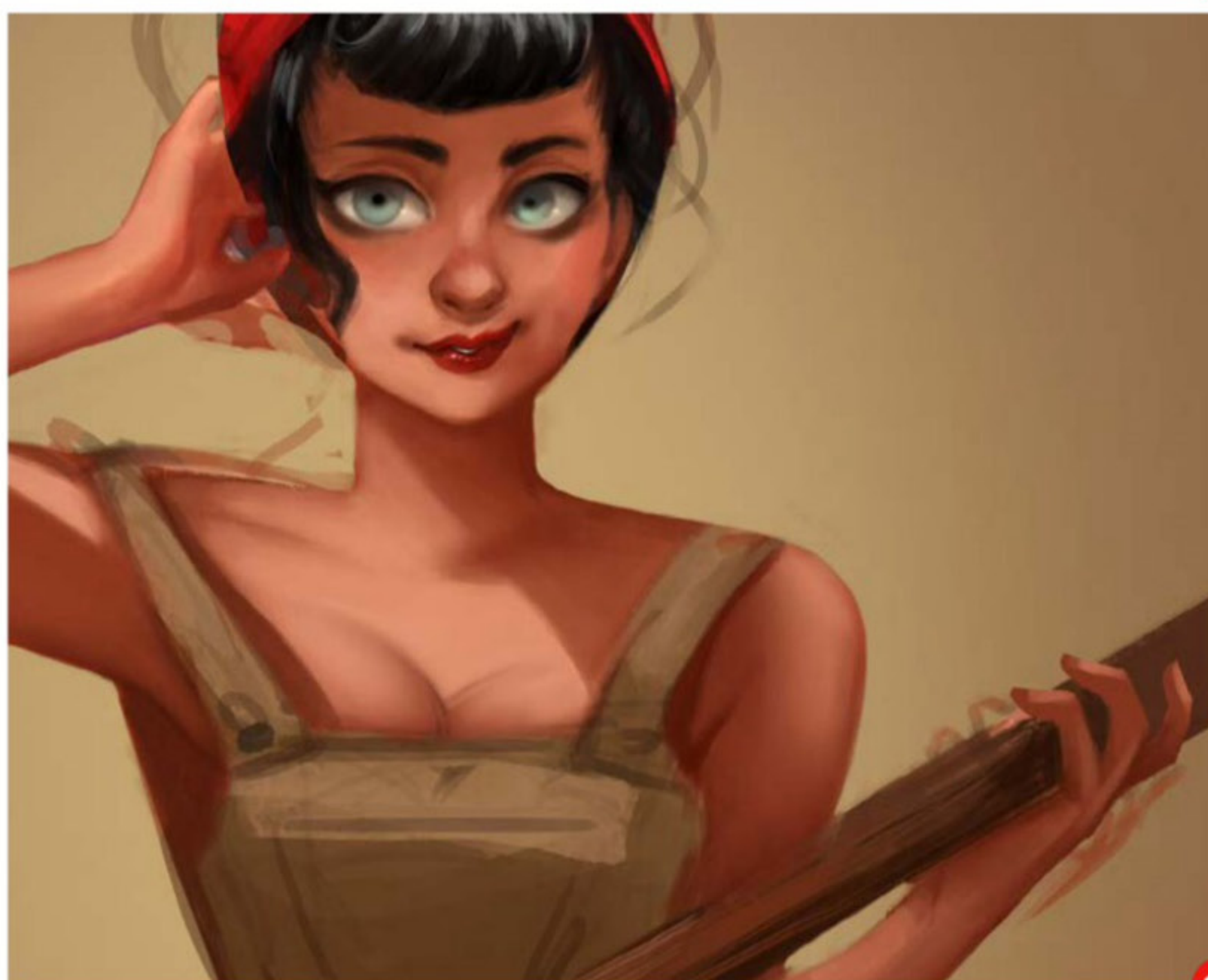
09

the hands, because I find it the most difficult to draw. At this point I refer to references, by taking a picture of my hands in the correct pose, or using the internet. I'm painting the shape of the hands, adding highlights and shadows. I try not to add too many details here. ▶

07 Start to refine the body

08 Paint the shape of your hair and add details

09 Finish the pose by drawing good hands

10

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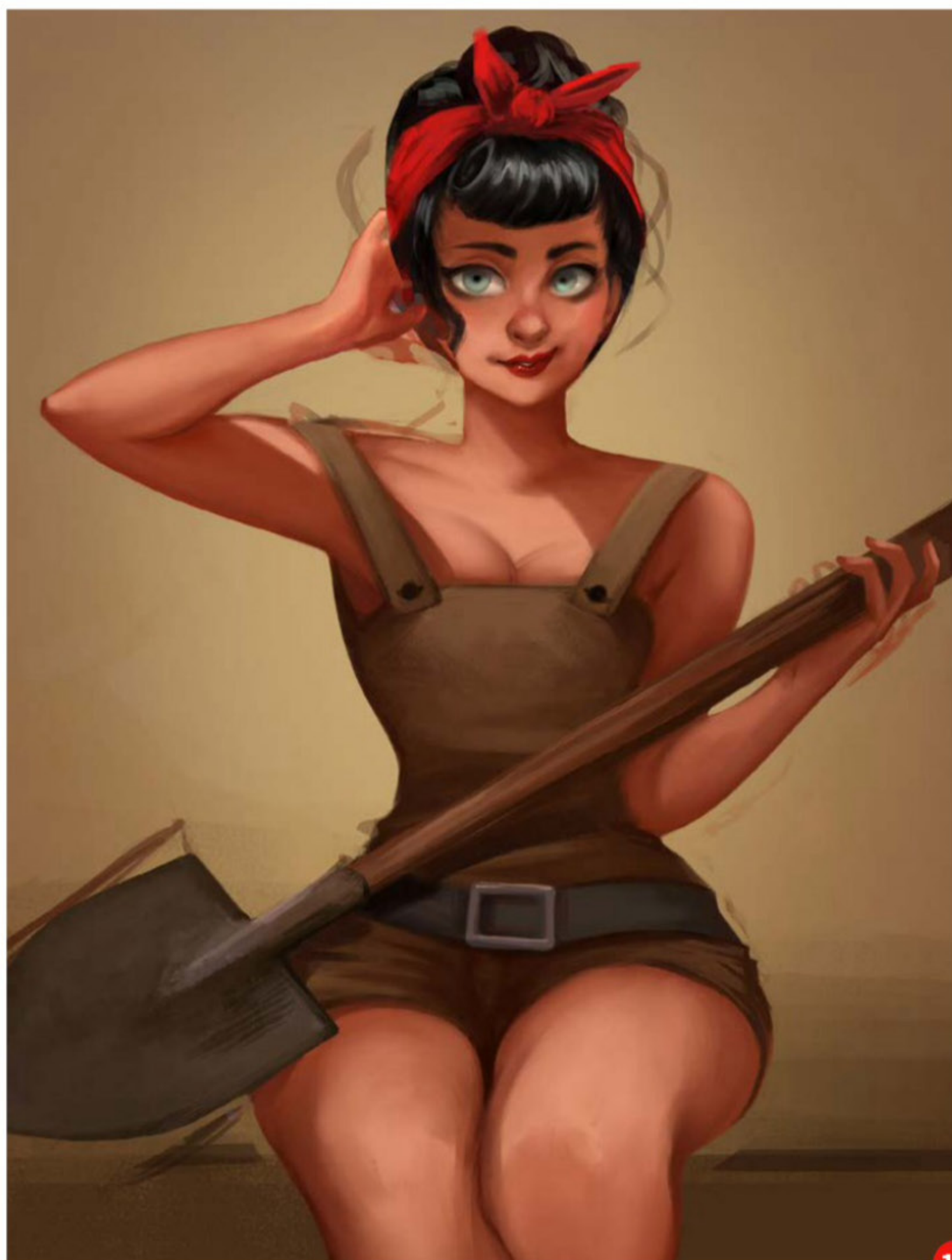
10 **Focus on the outfit and accessories:** After completing most of the body, I'm working on the clothing and accessories. Remember that all materials react differently to light. A thick fabric jumpsuit (such as this one) won't be too shiny for example. I also paint the shovel and belt keeping in mind the materials and surfaces.

11 **Tweaks, fixes and final details:** At this point I start to clean the whole picture, by removing the messy areas, such as the sketch underneath. I also add a few elements and finish the hairstyle by painting thicker strands of hair to frame her face. I paint in some more details to give the picture a little bit of life, such as a flash of pure white in the eyes, specular on the belt buckle to indicate the shine of the metal, some highlights on the lips to give a glossy feel, and a pattern to the bandana. For these sharp details I use a small Hard brush, which I also use to hint at the seams on the jumpsuit.
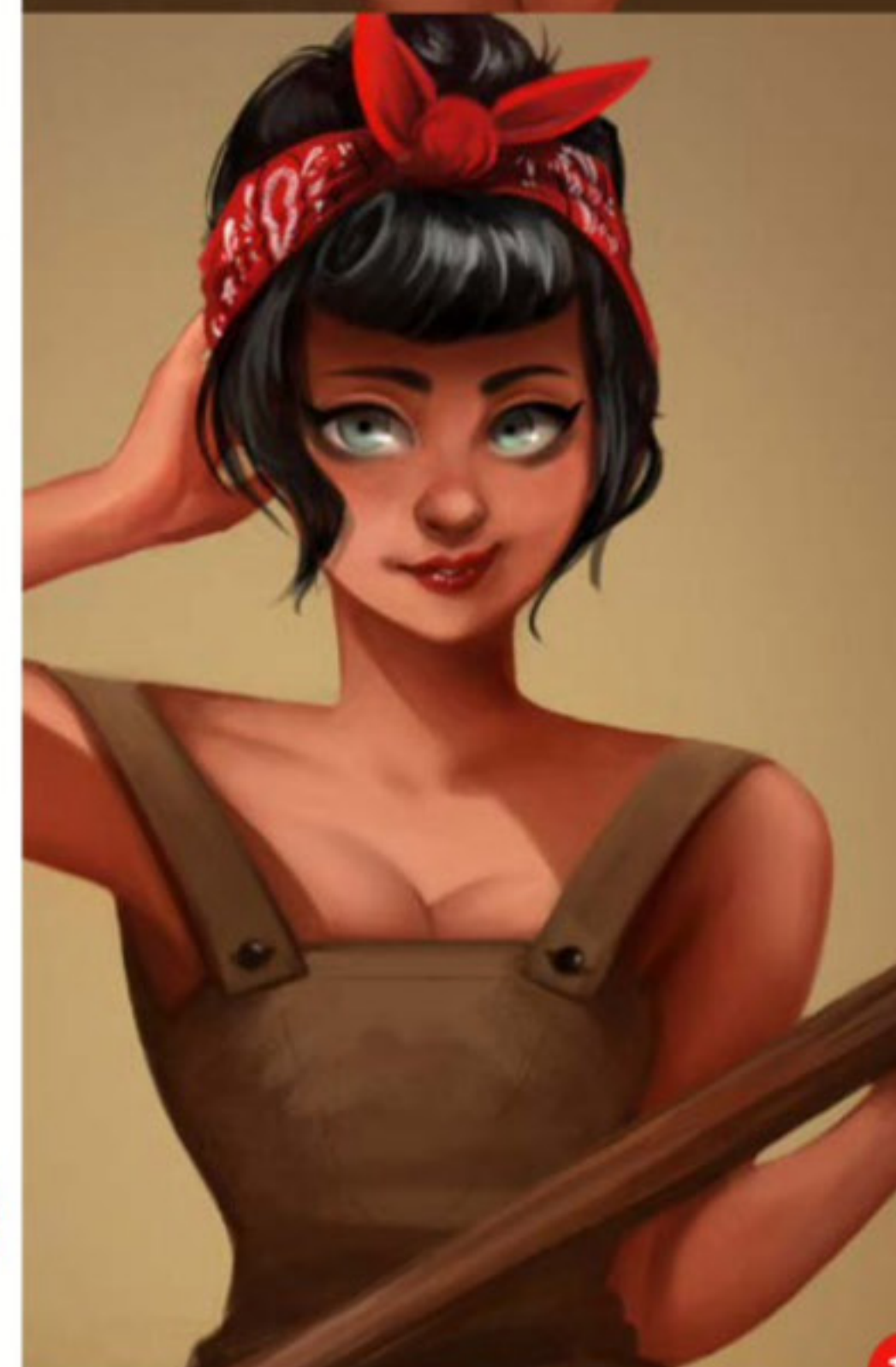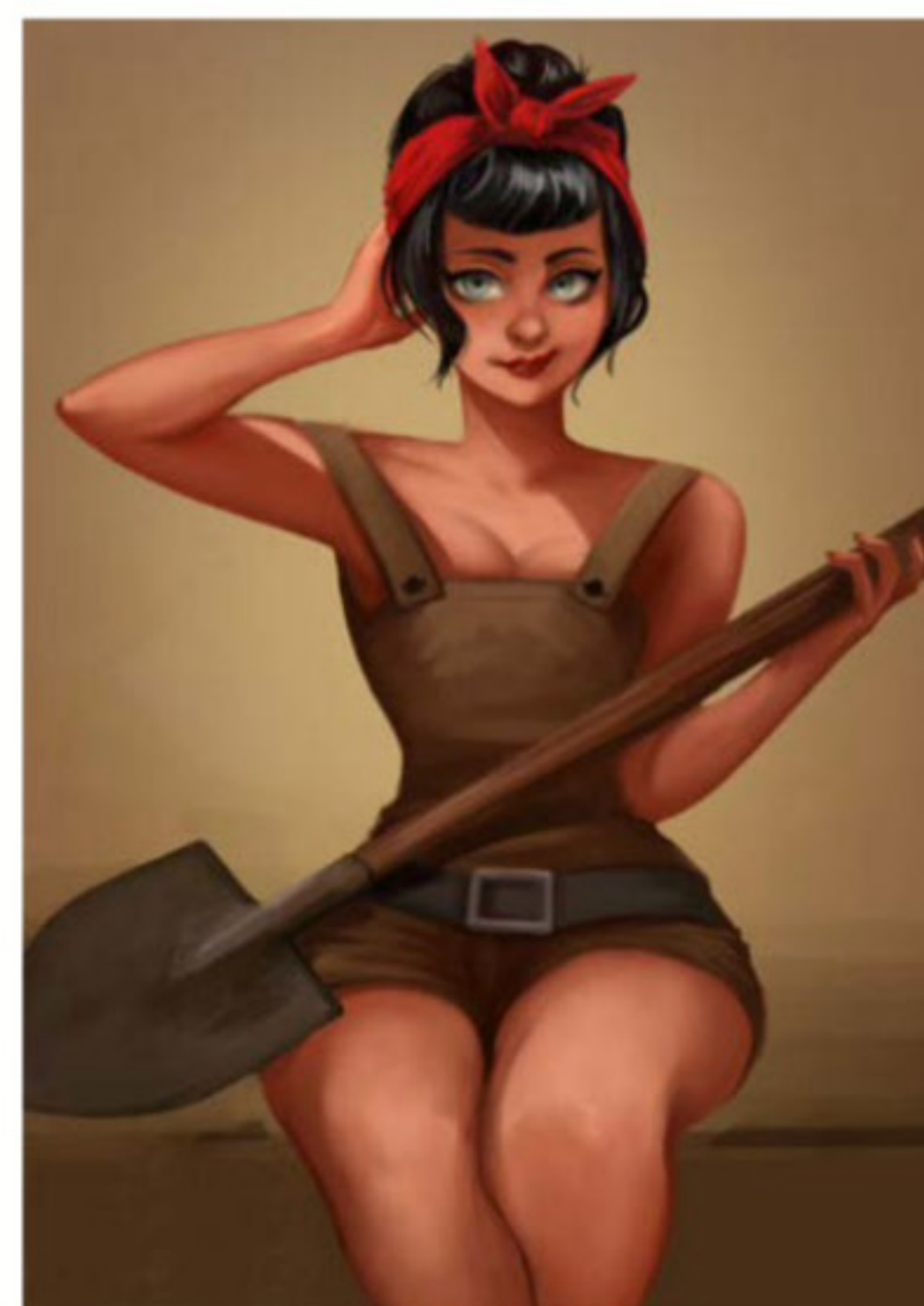
12 **Rim light, final adjustments and effects:** I pick a bright tone, which is close to the background color, and add some highlights around the edge of the character indicating a warm light coming from behind to make her stand out more from the background. I'm pleased with the look of the picture, but I think it's a little bit too saturated. I go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Color Balance and tweak the sliders until I get something that's working well for me. ●

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10 Painting the different materials

11 Cleaning up and refining the image

12 Rim lights make the character stand out more from the background
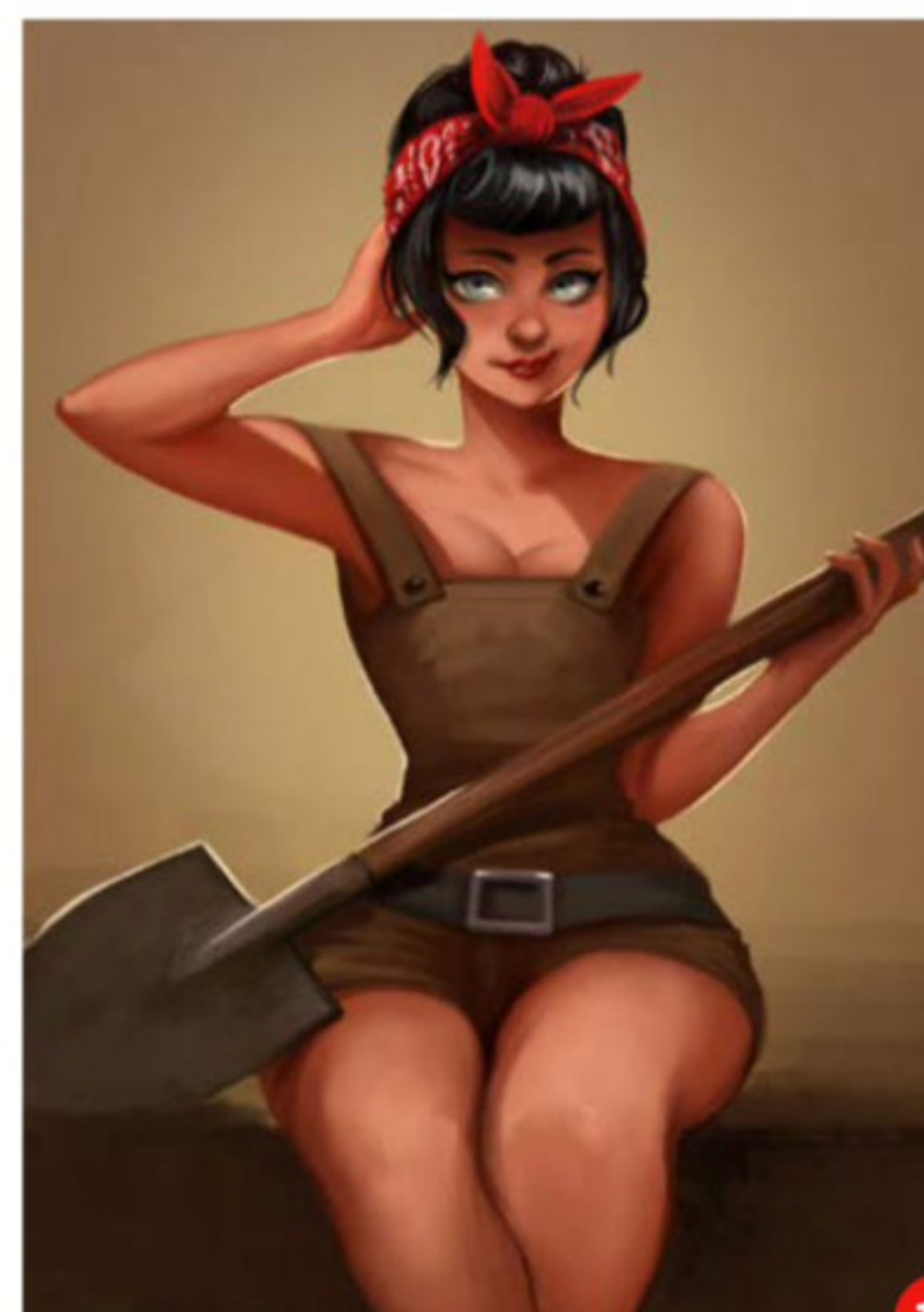
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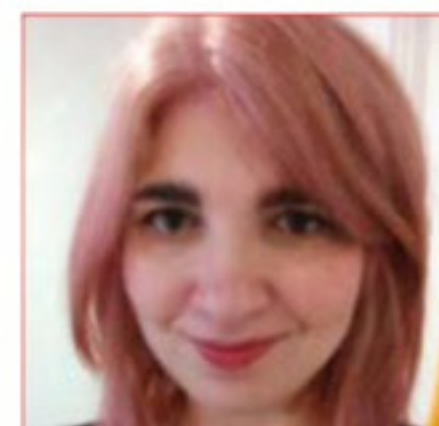
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Creating
stylized girls

Freelance illustrator Sabrina Miramon
shares her playful artwork and techniques

PAINT
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Step-by-step guide

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The Artist

Pedro Lopes
capricornandroid.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Pedro is a professional
concept artist from Portugal,
with five years of experience
in various indie game
companies. Right now, he's
working as a freelancer and
trying to improve himself.

Improve your creativity

Pedro Lopes takes on a 30-minute speed-painting challenge to demonstrate
the techniques used to increase your levels of creativity, while providing a
solid base for your speed-paintings to develop from ⊙

Pedro Lopes shares his fast-paced speed-painting tips and techniques...

A new type of speed-painting has been created. It's called 'spitpainting'. It represents a further challenge for all artists out there who can do really fast artwork in a limited amount of time (in this case, 30-minutes or less). This new concept has been inspiring a lot of starting artists, and even professionals, to put their skills to the test, without going overboard. It's really fun to have a go at it, and you'd be surprised by how many talented artists come up with the most intriguing and ingenious ideas for the daily subjects posted in the Facebook group dedicated to spitpainting.

Normally, you'd think that it would be impossible to make anything good in that amount of time, but in reality, you can do it. Hopefully, after reading my tutorial you will be able to do it just like me. Just remember: practice makes perfect (and spit painting is like an extreme form of practice).

The theme I have to work with this time is a bit of a challenge, because there's three points of interest to cover in one image. The keywords given were a pilot, a dragon, and a specific type of scenario (post-apocalyptic).

So how do I do it? In the next steps, I will be showing you my method of working in this harsh and fast(er) paced type of speed-painting, and you will come to see how simple it is once you get the hang of it.
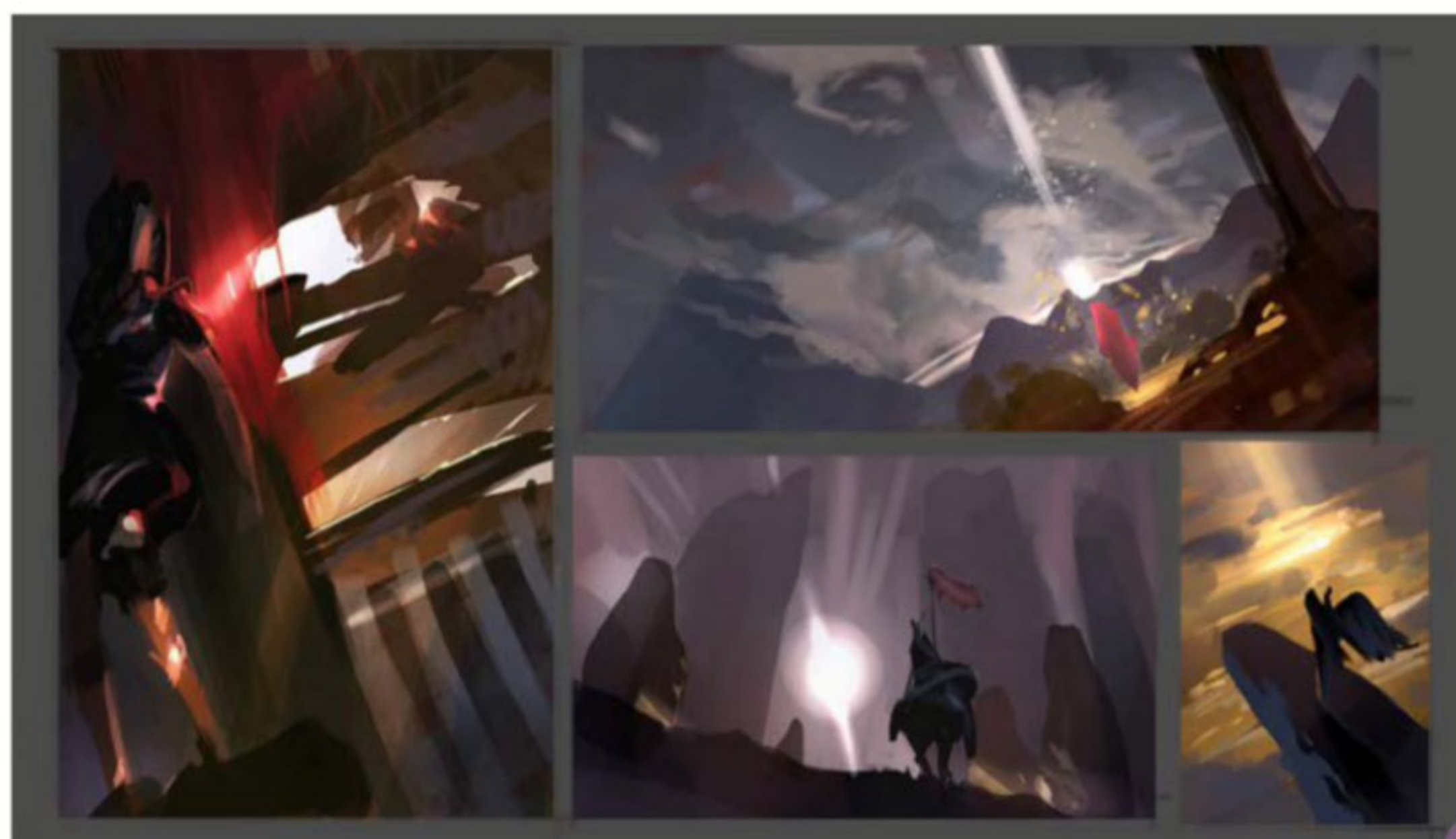
01 Preparation: Before anything else I'm going to do some warm ups. Artists are like car engines: when you don't warm them up properly, the car will feel sluggish.

So during the day, likely before doing any speed-paintings, I always do some other really fast practice paintings, either from old master's works, photographs or even cinematic screenshots. In here I'm going to work a bit from my memory and do some random ideas to get me going.

02 Start the timer!: Now I start drawing the actual subject, I try to get a good grasp of what I'm supposed to draw. A good rule of thumb for any start is: 'don't know it, research it'. So I'm researching about all kinds of things here, such as dragons, pilots, cities in ruins; everything that could aid my creativity and give it a solid base from which to spring. Now I feel confident enough to start the timer and sketch initial ideas. I start sketching something really loose; it takes less than a minute to create these, because I have a good foundation already in the back of my mind. ▶

01 Pedro has been creating a visual library since he was very young, which helps his creativity a lot

02 Don't be worried about doing correct shapes, just try to get ideas out of your head as fast as possible
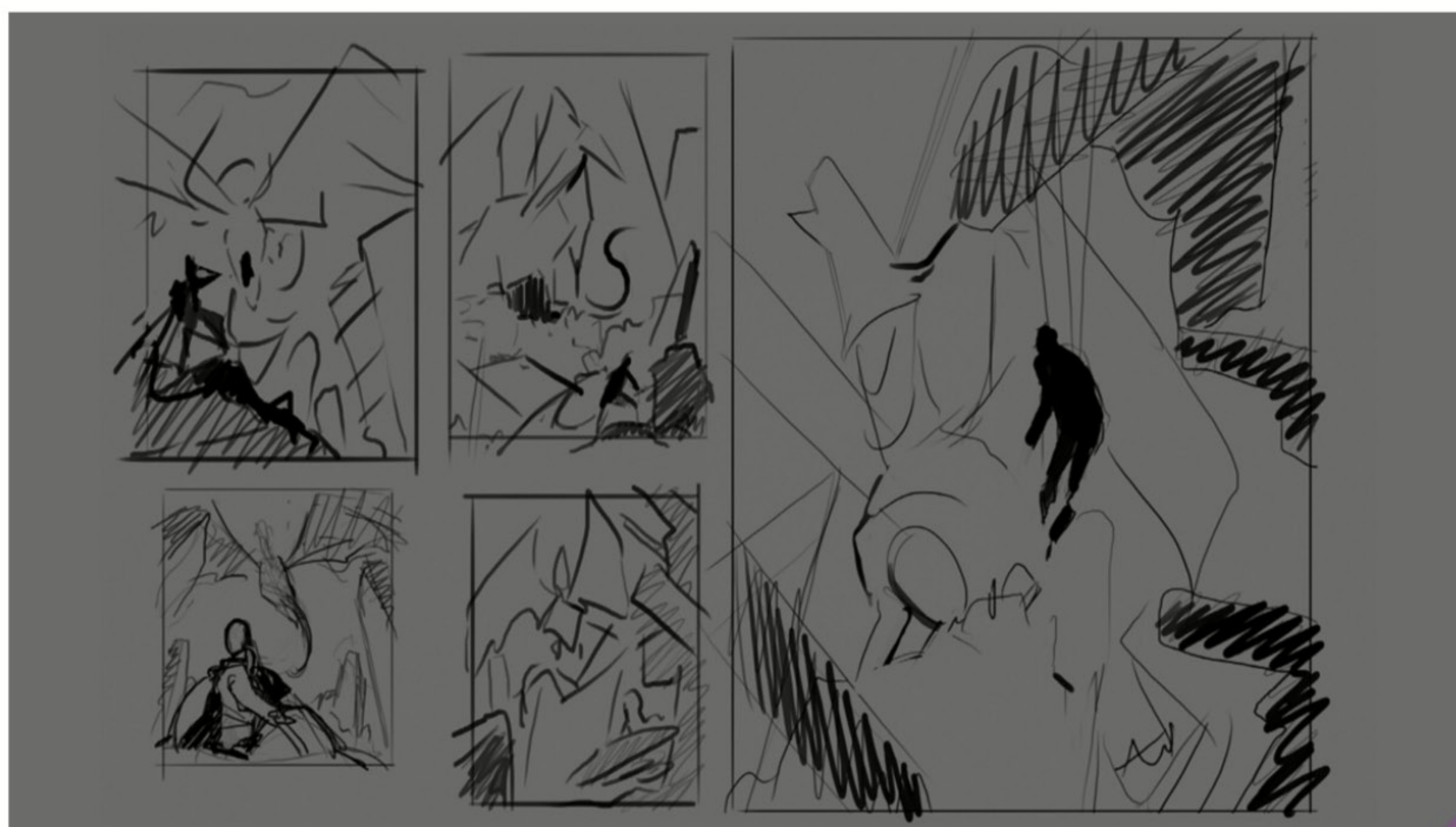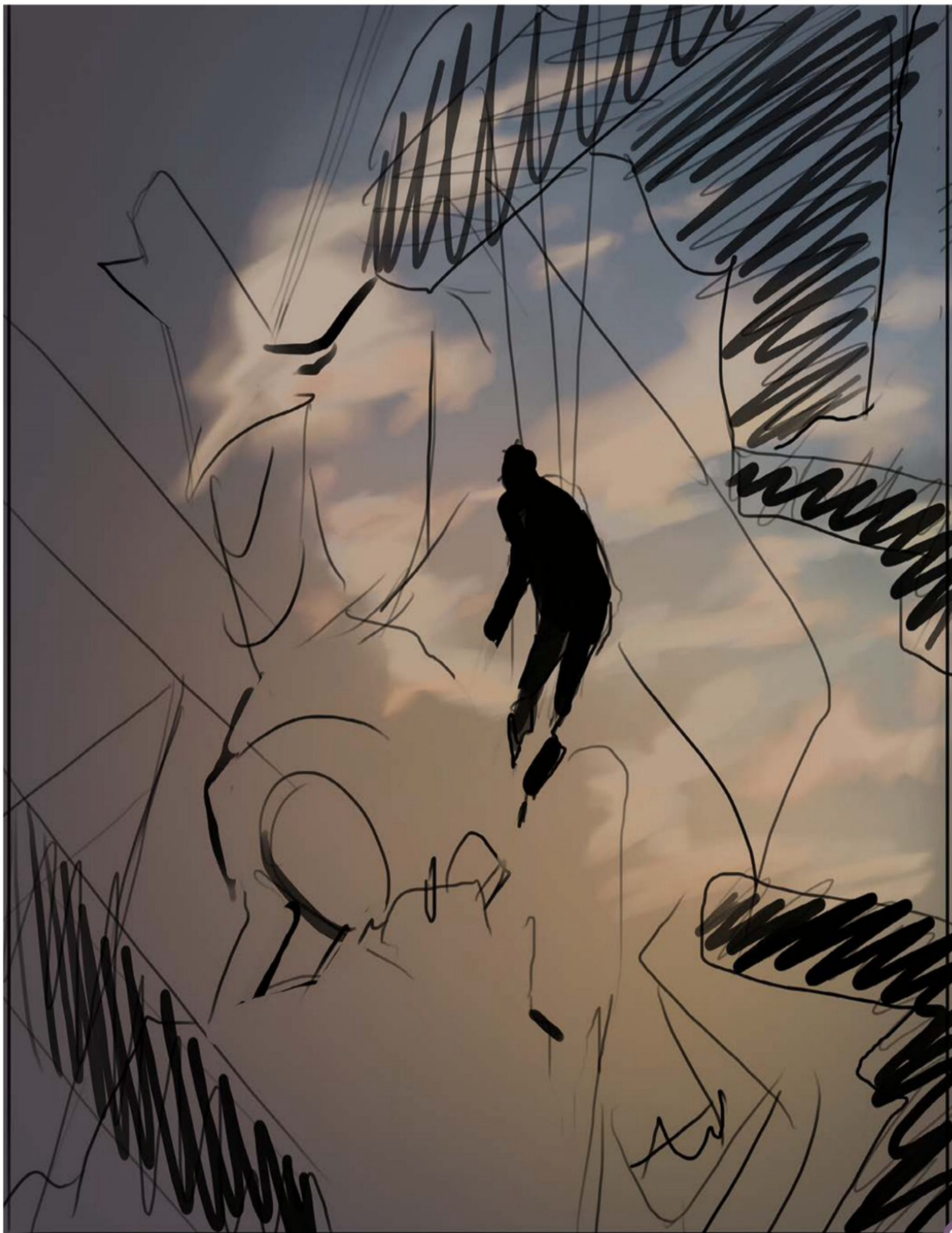
03 **Background:** Next, I create a separate layer, making a square selection that more or less fits the spacing of my sketch, and then use the Paint Bucket tool to fill it with a midtone blue. I then lock the layer so that I don't need to clean any mess later down the line. With a quick cloud mixer brush, I lay some light orange on it, and with the Dodge tool, I go over the spot where I want the sunlight to be. The Dodge tool does give good and bad results however, so watch out for any exaggerated usage of it, because it might ruin your image.

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04 **Shapes and forms:** Following my earlier sketch, I create more defined shapes, although still very quickly, while using the Lasso tool to make every form somewhat clean, so that I don't waste much time later on rendering the image and erasing edges too much. I put all of them into different layers, fill the selection with the Paint Bucket tool and lock them for easier paintovers.

05 **Color:** Having all the layers locked now, I start to add some color with a flat brush over the shapes, in order to get a better sense of where the light is hitting from. I'm not afraid to experiment at this stage, as this is the part where I have most fun. However here I'm still trying to match what would be the correct colors for the objects and also thinking about how the environment would affect those colors.

06 **First details:** By now, I know the direction I want to take, and I start using more skin midtones, while bringing the lightness down a bit for the dragon, which is my middle focal point. I also apply more midtones overall and add more light hitting the objects and the pilot. Some hints of light hitting your objects are a quick way to provide a sense of depth, rather than just trying to give a lot of detail; since I don't have the time for that I need to keep it simple. ▶

03 Pedro uses a mixer brush a lot for painting skies. This brush setting gives really good and fast results

04 Locking the layer makes it easier to draw details inside the object shape created

05 Using a lot of colors can be tricky so divide it into shadow, lighter areas and midtones

06 Keeping an eye on where light is hitting from to make adjustments to the colors
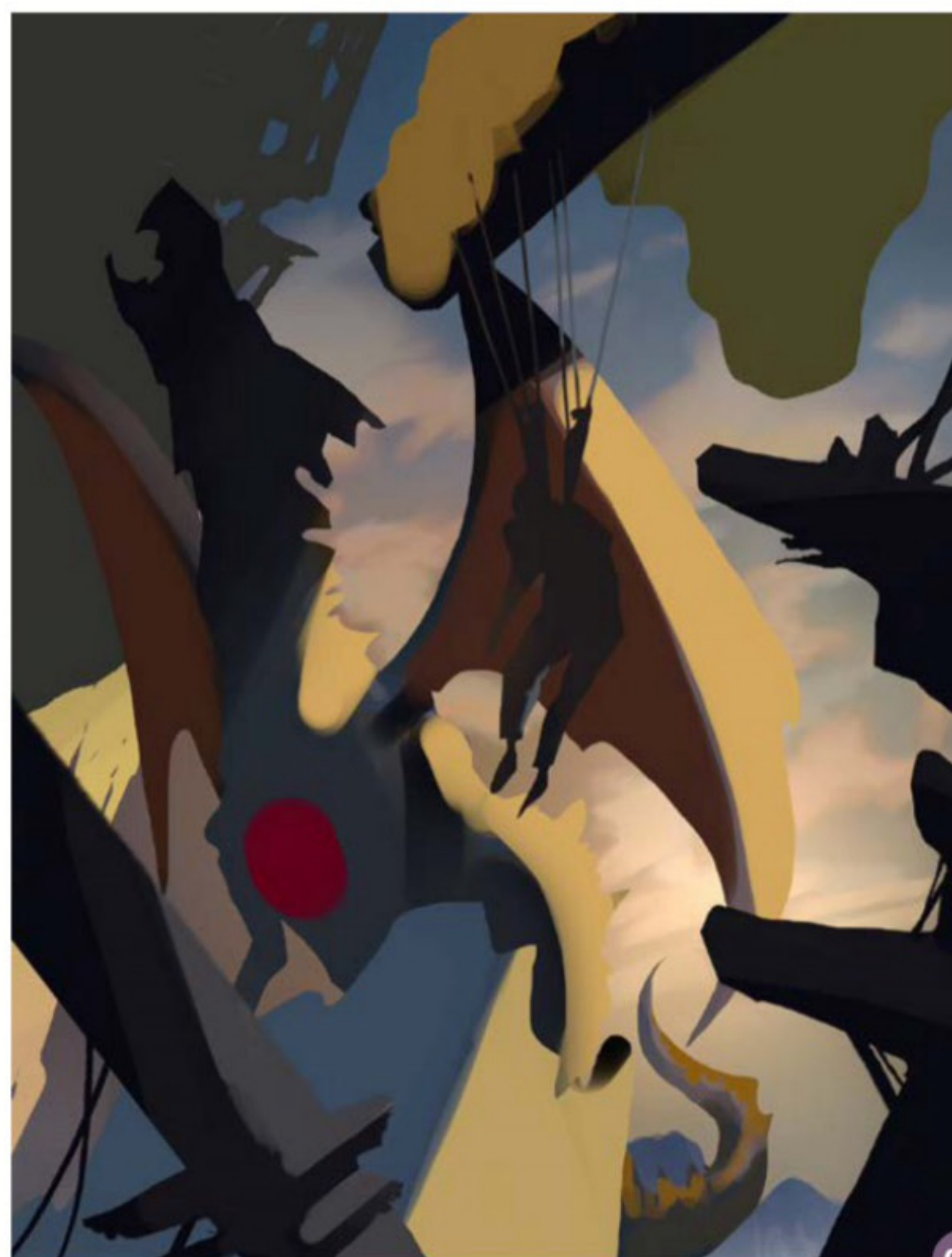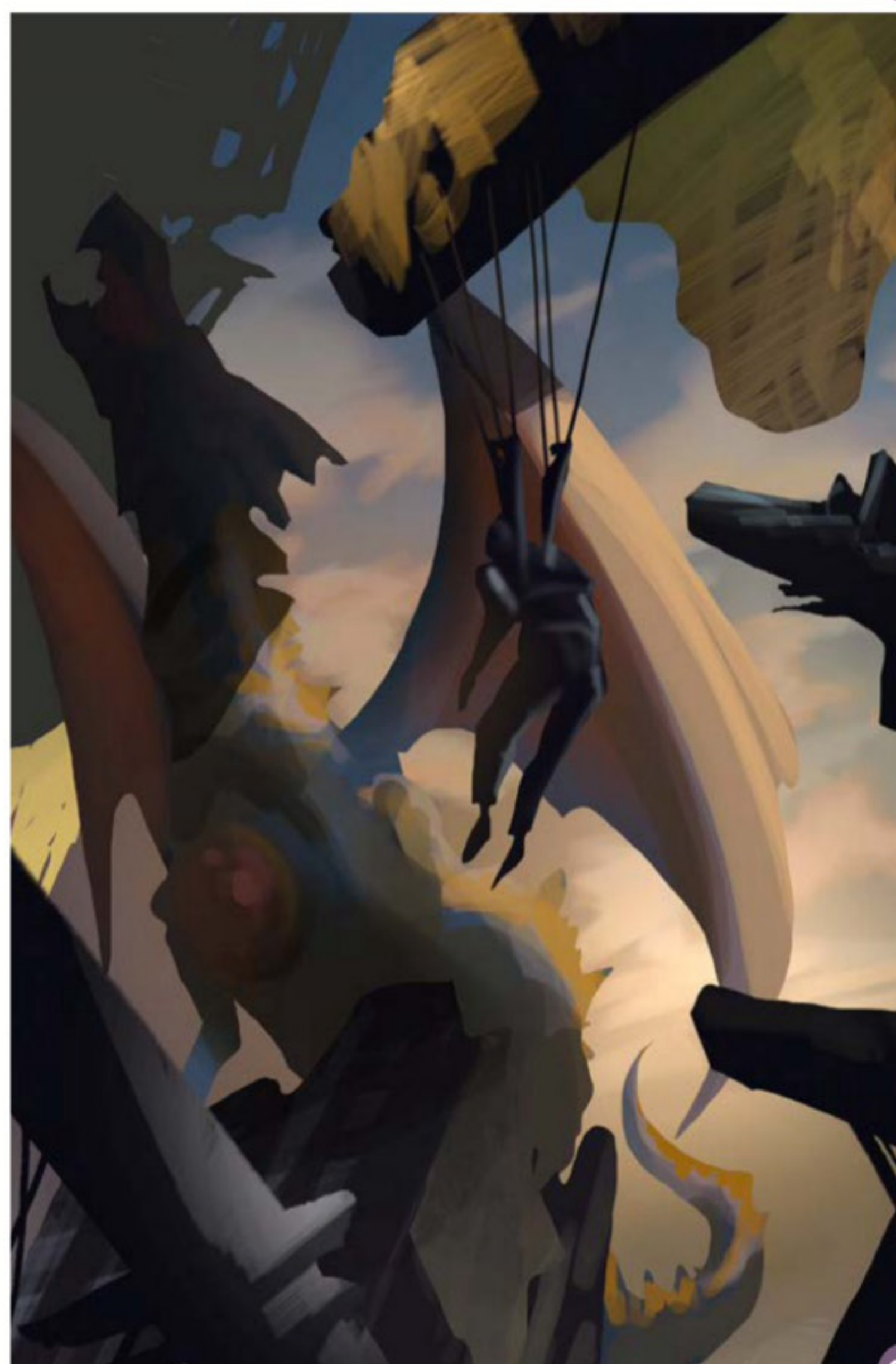
07 Points of interest: At this moment I'm halfway through the image, so I start to add details by working with the light and colors more. Using a square textured brush set to Overlay, I work on the spots of interest in the painting. I detail the wings and torso of the dragon, as well as the buildings and the pilot, with a Soft and a Hard brush. The image is starting to fit to its proposed themes. I have also gotten rid of much of the light hitting the poles in the foreground and keeping it tighter and simpler.

08 Detailing the dragon: Now I really want to put some detail into the dragon. The clock is ticking, so I need to be consistent here, creating sharp forms is what I need to make it read better. I grab the Lasso tool again, and in a new layer, I start to add more shapes on top of the dragon's silhouette. I define the right arm, leg and the torso orb. I constantly switch to a Chalk brush, and work the form of the head, which at this point I detail a little bit more than the rest, so it pops out from the background more.

09 Ambient effects: In a new layer, I grab a couple of scatter brushes I have laying around and add some really brisk strokes to bring life into the scene. I make some final changes to the middle building (where the dragon is), to add more detail. I lock the new layer I created and then, with a Soft brush, I gently brush over it with either lighter or darker tones, to help diffuse the strokes and making the building's texture seem more uniform.

10 Finish line: The sands of time are running out, so I try to make some quick revisions to the shapes on the buildings, as well as some value checks. To do this, I normally merge all the layers together and mess around with Level/Brightness adjustments. Also I turn on a black-filled layer set to Color, so that I can quickly check my values in black-and-white. Now I do some more final checks, add some final shadows on the dragon's body and put some little details on the foreground and I'm finished. ●
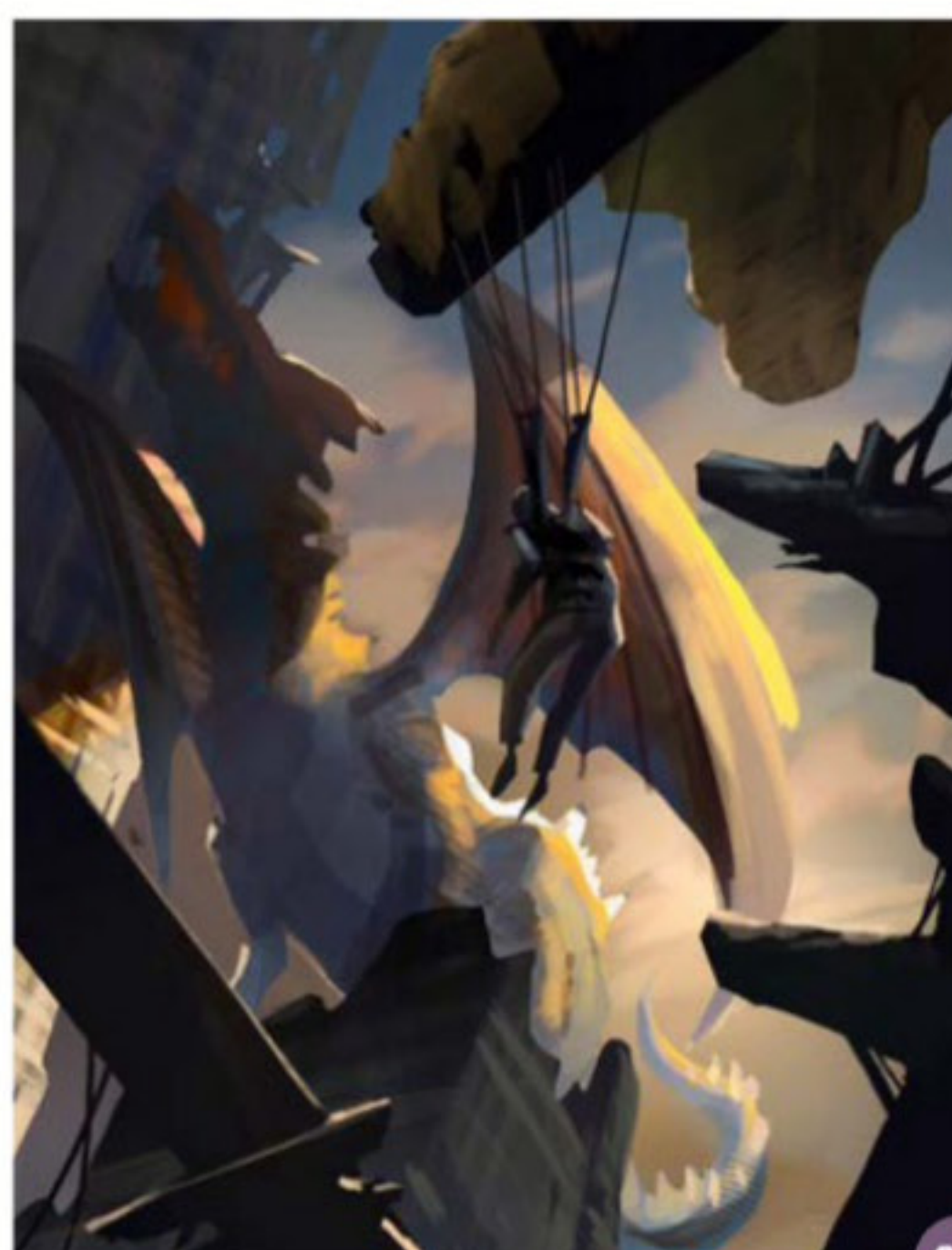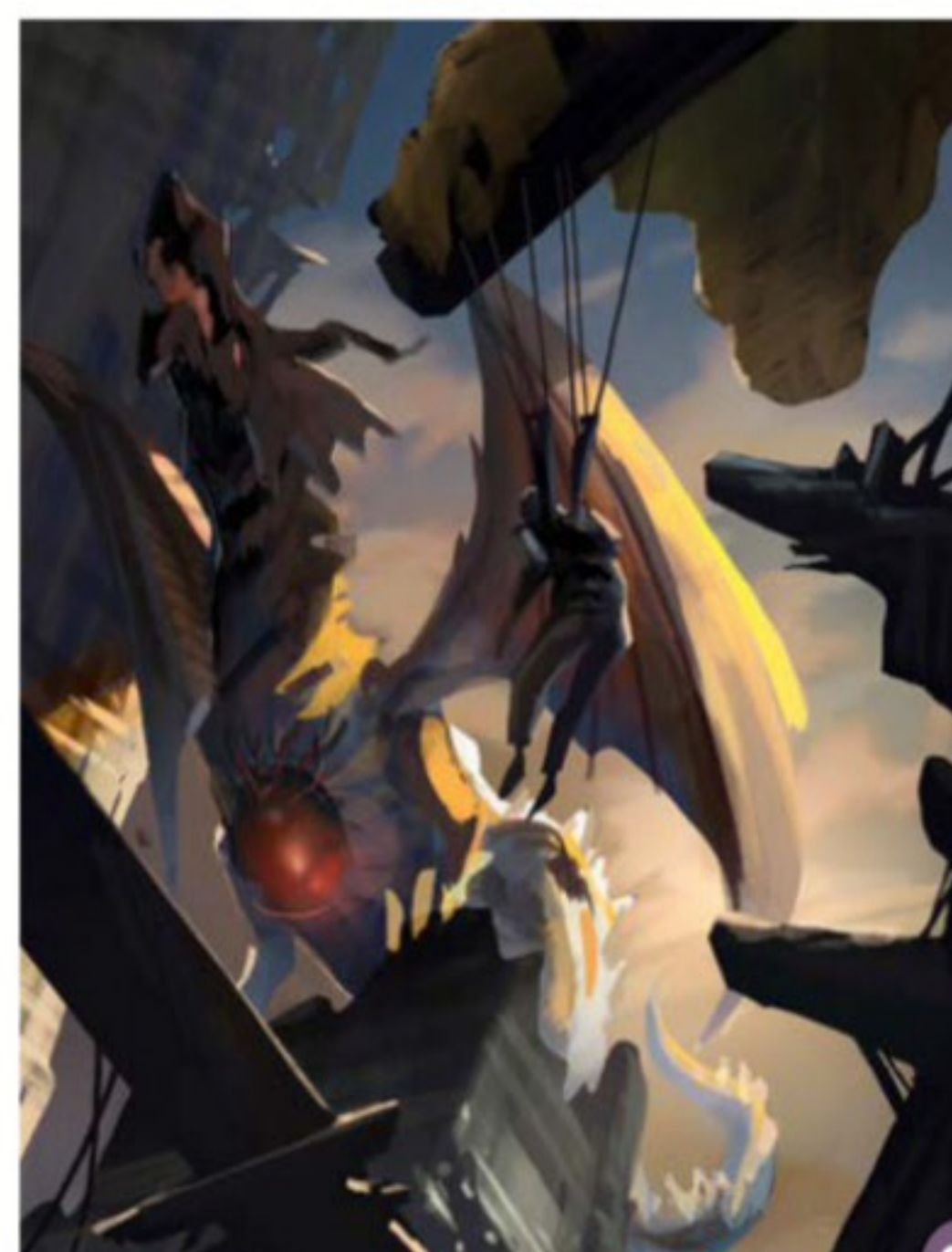
07 Keeping the entire layer separated makes it easier to keep going back and forth to correct any mistakes

08 Pedro re-adds the orb, making it simpler and makes use of the Dodge tool for quick highlights

09 Adding special effects creates a bit of life, so add a bit here and there where it may help

07

08

09

The Artist

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The Artist

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Brun Croes is a freelance illustrator working in the animation, games and entertainment industry. He's been active as a professional for four years focusing mainly on visual development.

Learn how to sketch a character

Discover how to design, draw and shade a character for a narrative illustration from your imagination, with this step-by-step guide by Brun Croes ▶

Brun Croes reveals his process for sketching characters...

It's easy to get lost in your imagination; it's one thing to see them in your head, and another to put them down on paper. In this chapter I will show you how to simplify that process by designing, drawing and shading a character for a narrative illustration. Our goal is to experiment with designs and to figure out ways to ease the process. ▶

Exercise 1: Pose
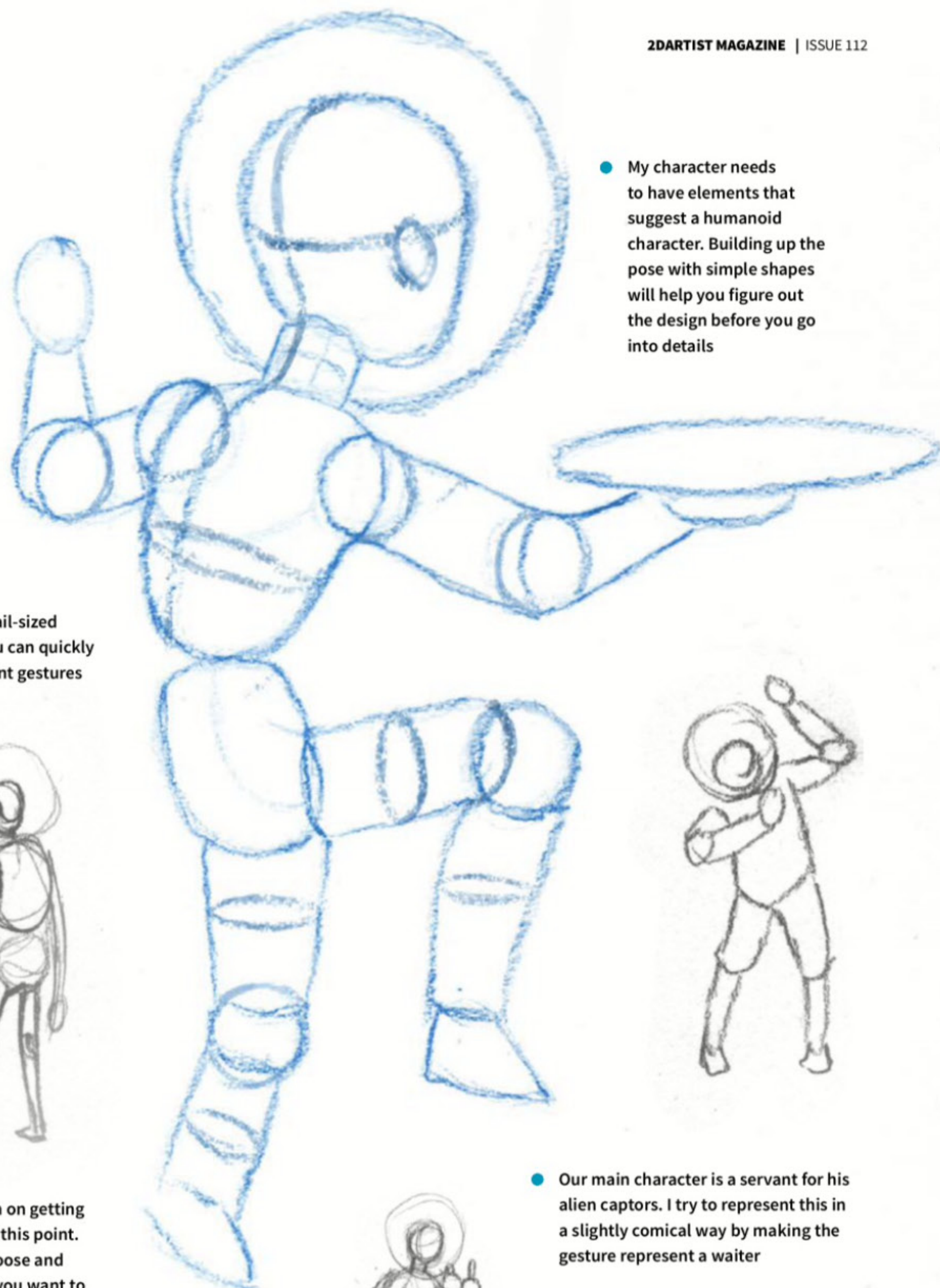
● My character needs to have elements that suggest a humanoid character. Building up the pose with simple shapes will help you figure out the design before you go into details

● Using small thumbnail-sized gesture drawings you can quickly come up with different gestures

● Don't focus too much on getting the anatomy right at this point. Keep your sketches loose and try to focus on what you want to convey with your gesture

● Our main character is a servant for his alien captors. I try to represent this in a slightly comical way by making the gesture represent a waiter

● Try different gestures by limiting your time on each one of them to a few seconds

● Small gestures can often clearly communicate a message. Even though simply drawn, they can quickly translate an idea

01
Getting started with the pose: I've decided on a gesture that I like and I'm ready to start building up my character's pose. I begin by drawing geometric forms that, when combined, form a believable blueprint/template that I can then use later on to build my character's design around. When drawing a character it's a smart idea to start with the torso and hips. They are the part of our body that all the rest, arms, legs and head, are connected to, so they are essential to the rest of our pose. For the torso I draw a somewhat narrow-to-broad elliptic shape – this gives an impression of the shoulders and a waist.

02
Adding the hips: Now I add the shape of the hips to help define the stance and how the spine-curve of the character will run, giving us more insight into the posture of our character. Here I use the combination of torso and hip to show how the character is bending forward a bit. I add a few hints of directional lines that help to somewhat define the dimensions and form of the geometrical shapes. For the shape of the hips I use another elliptic shape. The top a bit more flat than the bottom.

03
Adding a head: Adding a head shape helps to convey to us that we are looking at a humanoid figure. It's a part that is instantly recognizable to the human eye. For the neck I use a small cylinder to connect the head shape and the torso. Notice how the cylinder is slightly in perspective, further helping us to determine the form of our character. I add the head by drawing another elliptic shape. I draw the top of the head shape

● I use a blue pencil for my early line drawings; they will be less visible once I trace them with a graphite pencil

01

● Using a blue pencil also gives me more room to fail with my lines. I can draw a few on top of each other and afterwards use the line I like the most when I trace it with my graphite pencil

02

● Think of your shapes as if they were in a 3D space. Things to consider would be which shape overlaps the other, and which shape is closer to the viewer or further away

03

- Consider the scale of the individual elements that make up your character and how this will impact the look of your character

04

- I choose to keep the head fairly large in contrast to a rather small torso – this gives the main character a somewhat more child-like appearance

05

a little bigger than the bottom part; this way we get a feeling that there's a chin and the indication of the head's braincase.

04 Adding some legs and feet: Now I add some legs and feet to give our character a sense of motion. Drawing one leg up and another one straight down with its feet slightly pushed up, I can give the character the feeling of walking upstairs. I make sure that the legs aren't drawn in straight lines and make them curve a bit, as if the character is bending through a bit of weight from his upper body.

I use simple cylinders and small circles to give an impression of the upper legs, lower legs and knees. Working together as some kind of mechanical construction, the circles act as an anchor point on which the cylinders can rotate forward or backwards. It helps to look at some pictures of human skeletons to see how the joints are connected and able to move. For the feet I add some pyramid-like shapes.

05 Adding arms, hands and some form: The arms and hands are similar to the legs and feet, they also play a crucial part in portraying the character's pose. As seen in the previous step, I build up the arms by using cylinders and circles to represent the arms and joints. For the hands I draw elliptical shapes. One of them more flat than the other because it is holding a plate and will most likely be covered for a part. I add some new lines along all of my geometric shapes to accentuate their form in space. I keep these lines loose and use them more as a suggestion. ▶

⚡ PRO TIP
Ghost lines

When sketching out these geometrical shapes I use a blue pencil. This gives me several interesting options. You can keep adding marks and lines until you see a shape that you think is best. Then you can go over this with a graphite pencil. If you scan the document later in Photoshop (or another photo-editing program) you can easily remove the blue lines with some of Photoshop's built in adjustment layers. This way you can easily keep your nice graphite pencil lines afterwards.

- Even when lightly tracing your blue lines, they already seem to fade into the background

Exercise 2: Head

● This is an exploration stage, so don't worry about drawing pretty things just yet. Try to imagine who this character would be in your illustration

● As the character is facing away from the viewer, exploring different elements such as hairstyles and the size of the features you can see (ear, head shape and so on) can help define the character
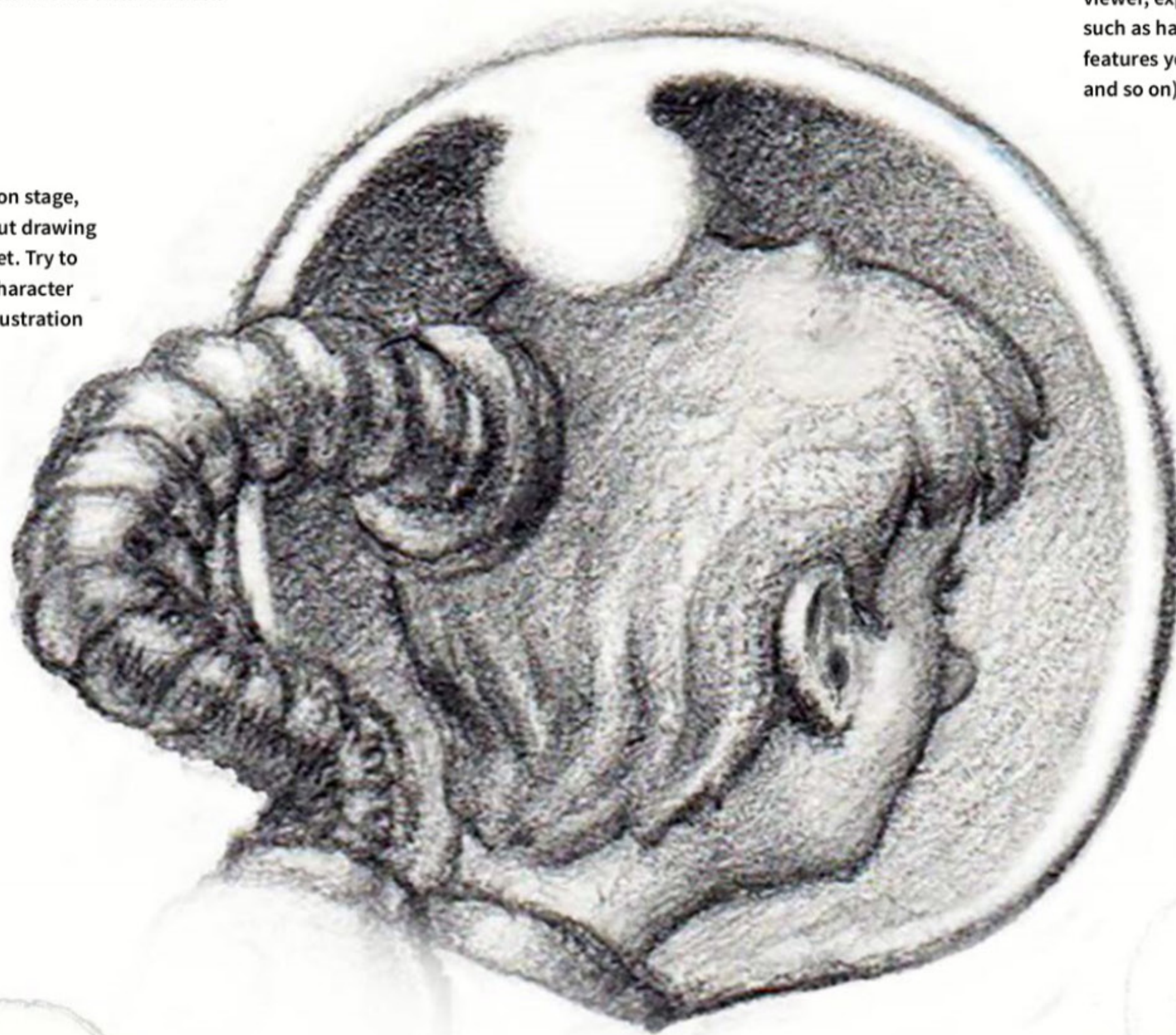
● An overgrown beard in a helmet might help to tell the story of someone who has been captured for a while. The big glasses and bald head help to give a feeling of old age as well
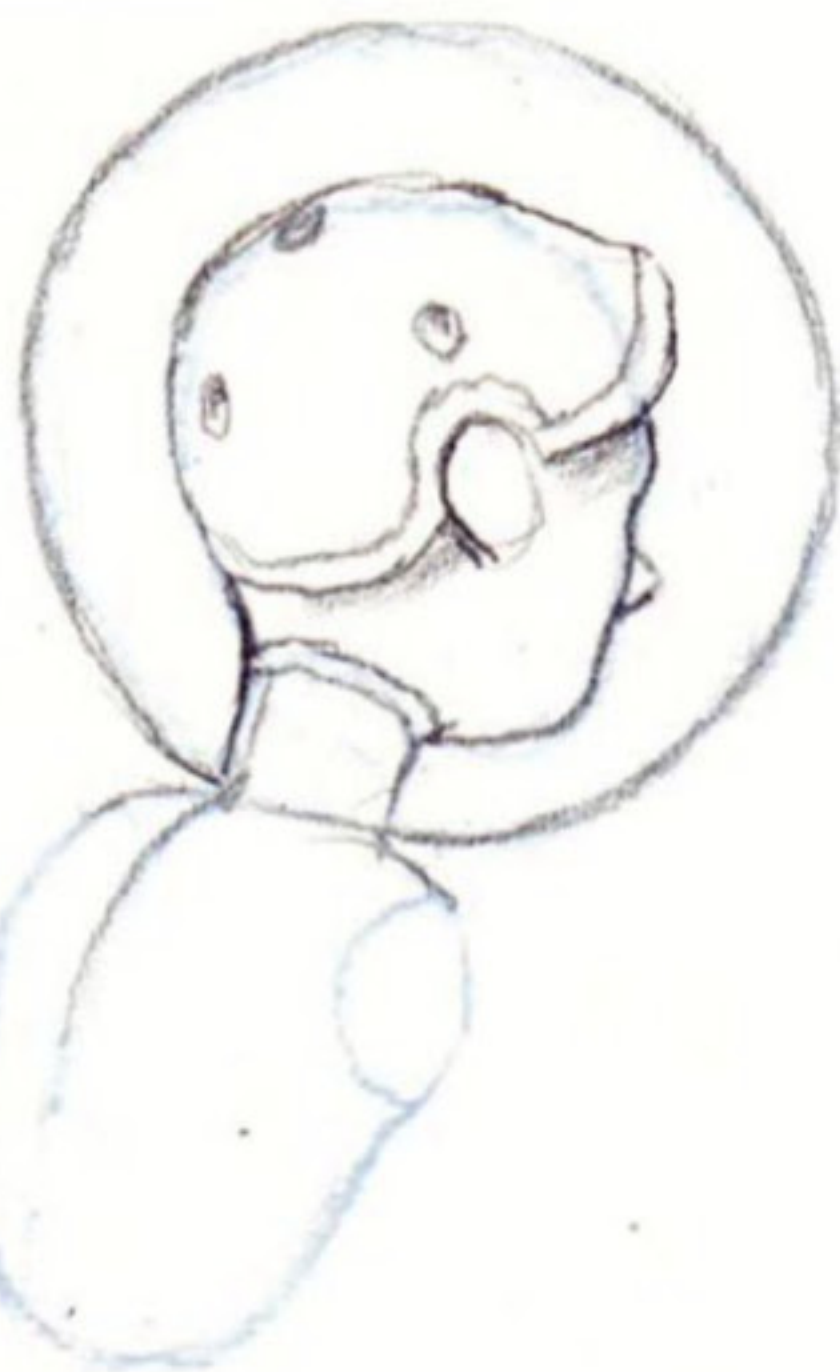
● The fixed position of our main character's pose leaves us with the focus on the back of his head. This leaves the face somewhat anonymous, giving the viewer a sense of mystery

● The character's face can be naked or hidden behind a mask. For our illustration I choose to go with a naked face. The front of the face is already hidden, but adding a mask would take away part of his humanity

● Different hairstyles can define a character's attitude. A mohawk quickly gives a character some attitude, while a cleaner haircut will give the character more innocence

01 Building up our character's head:
Let's start of by using our template, which we made in the previous tutorial. For the head I like to start off by placing my eyes and ears first. In this case we don't really see the eyes because of the position the character's head is in, so I pace a small oval near the center of the head's elliptical shape. Right next to the ear I draw an 'S' shaped line that will represent the side of the character's face. For the purpose of this tutorial I made the line appear a bit darker, but when drawing my actual lines at the beginning of a sketch I make sure to draw them very lightly so that they won't show in the end.

I also add a simplistic representation of the character's hair. When drawing hair I begin by drawing its silhouette, imagining a form that fits around the character like a blob of clay.

02 Adding some definition:
Now that I have my building blocks ready I start to suggest some more detail. I add some small pyramid-like shapes along the curved outlines of the hair shape; this immediately makes it more recognizable. Underneath the shape of the ear I add some dark shading by making a few hard dark pencil marks, this starts to give the illusion that the ear is sticking out a bit.

I add a faint pencil line along the side of the helmet to indicate where the border between the light and dark parts of the glass will be. I add some small lines alongside the bottom-right of the hair silhouette and the face shape, to indicate that the light is coming from a point behind him.

03 Shading in the shadows:
Now it's time to add a little bit of form. I correct the 'S' shaped line of the face to give it more definition and personality. I imagine this character to be quite young so I exaggerate the zygomatic bone (cheekbone) and eye socket a bit. I add a small line near the eye sockets to suggest at eyelashes.

● For my graphite pencil lines I use a mechanical pencil. More specifically the Graphgear1000 from Pentel. They have a nice weight to them

01
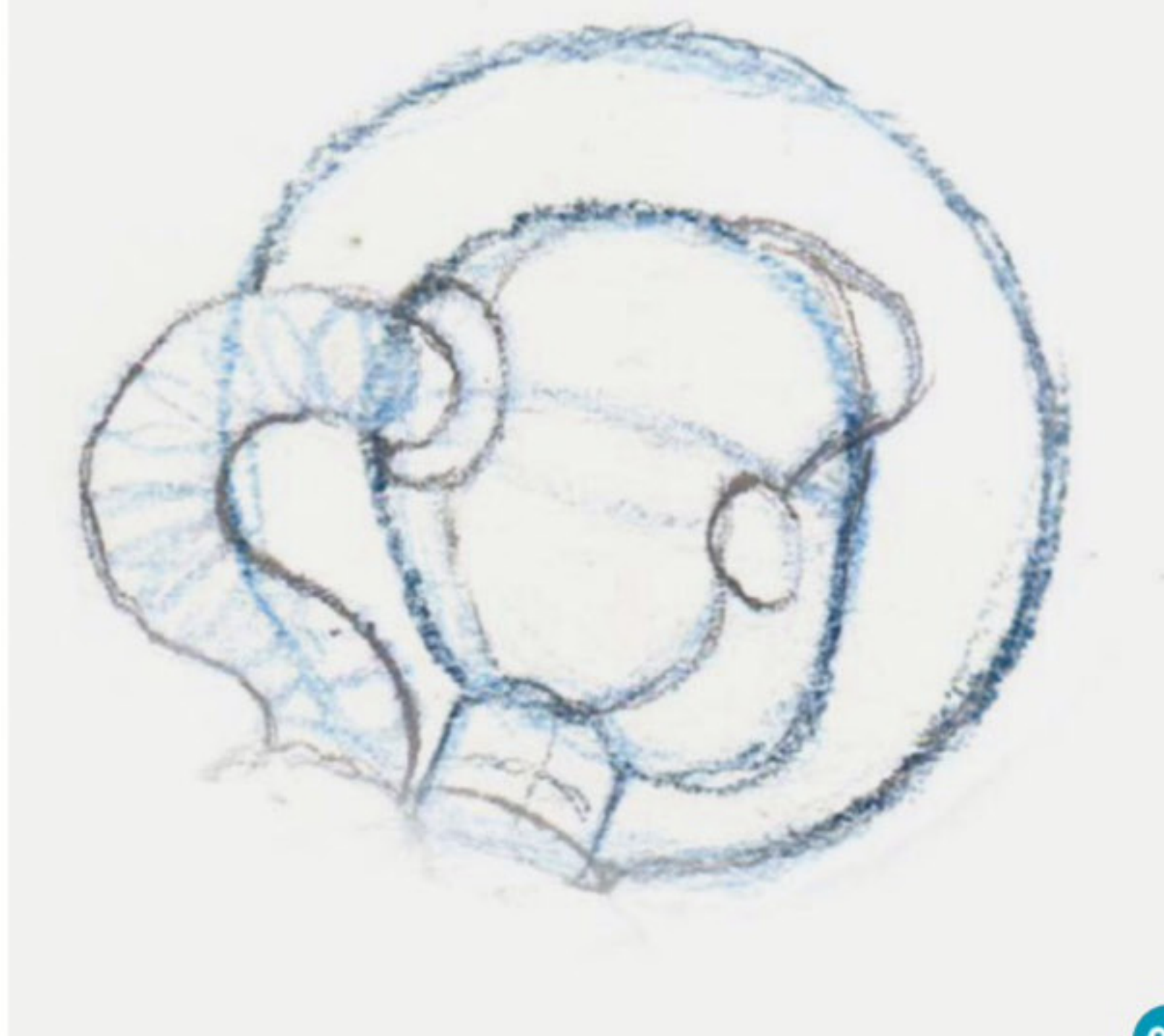
● I start of with a fairly thick (0.9mm) HB pencil, to give me smooth lines with a little bit of that graphite texture

02

● When shading I try to keep my mark making a bit rough, this will provide a bit of additional texture in the shadow zones when things get darker later on

03

● I make a few darker lines along the way, to accentuate certain areas of the face. A good place to do this is where two objects (such as the hair and the face) are about to touch

04

Time for some shading. I do this by drawing ever-so-lightly over the paper, and drawing small short lines close to each other. While doing this I try to imagine how every shape would look if it was a 3D sculpture, and I try to follow the shape of the form.

The direction of light comes from the direction of the viewer, so most of my shadows will be around the outlines of my shapes, leaving brighter spots of highlights in the center of the shapes. I use the same shading technique to suggest some hair locks that follow the shape of the head.

Where my shapes touch, around the ear and hairlines, I draw the existing lines a bit darker. I use a simple trick for the glass helmet to suggest its transparency and some reflection by drawing in some darker shading underneath the border-lines that we drew earlier. This will suggest some light and reflection on top of the helmet.

04 **Going a bit darker:** Now I continue with putting a layer of shading on top of everything. I alternate between two methods to do this. I start off by using the same technique that I mentioned in the previous step, placing light pencil marks next to each other. Where I want my shading to be darker, I add an extra layer of shading on top of it. To create darker, smoother shading, I make marks following small loop shapes.

For the helmet I add more shading on top, to contrast the bright highlight spot that we left out earlier. I darken the side of the ear, leaving a small area unshaded at the top, to provide a highlight that will help define its shape. Some extra shading near his cheek and neck towards the front side of his head helps to accentuate the roundness of his face and the structure underneath it.

05 **Refinement:** Time to refine all the elements of the face to complete it. At this point I mainly use the loop-marking technique to enhance my gradients, making sure that there's a nice contrast in the values that read well. I put some more shading down around the eyes and draw them a bit more clearly by drawing in a 'V' shaped line for the eyelashes. I add a nose by placing a small 'U' like shape on the outside of the outlines underneath the eyes. The nose helps establish that we are looking at a human face.

Add a few small but dark marks inside the shadow area of the ear to suggest the inside of the ear shell. As a finishing touch I clean up certain parts with my eraser, such as the highlight area of the glass helmet. ▶

● **Use an eraser to pick out and make highlights cleaner**

05

⚡ **PRO TIP**
Avoiding smudge
When shading use an extra piece of paper to put underneath your hand, this will minimize your hand smudging your pencil lines. If you're right-handed start shading from left to right, similarly for left-handed people start at the right and move to the left. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to make a clean looking drawing that loses its brilliance and value thanks to constant smudging. Instead use smudging to your advantage every now and then to smooth out shading; you can do this with several techniques. I use a simple piece of tissue paper to get the job done.

Exercise 3: Clothing

● The shape of the lines created by the design of the costume can help to create form and a 3D feel to your character
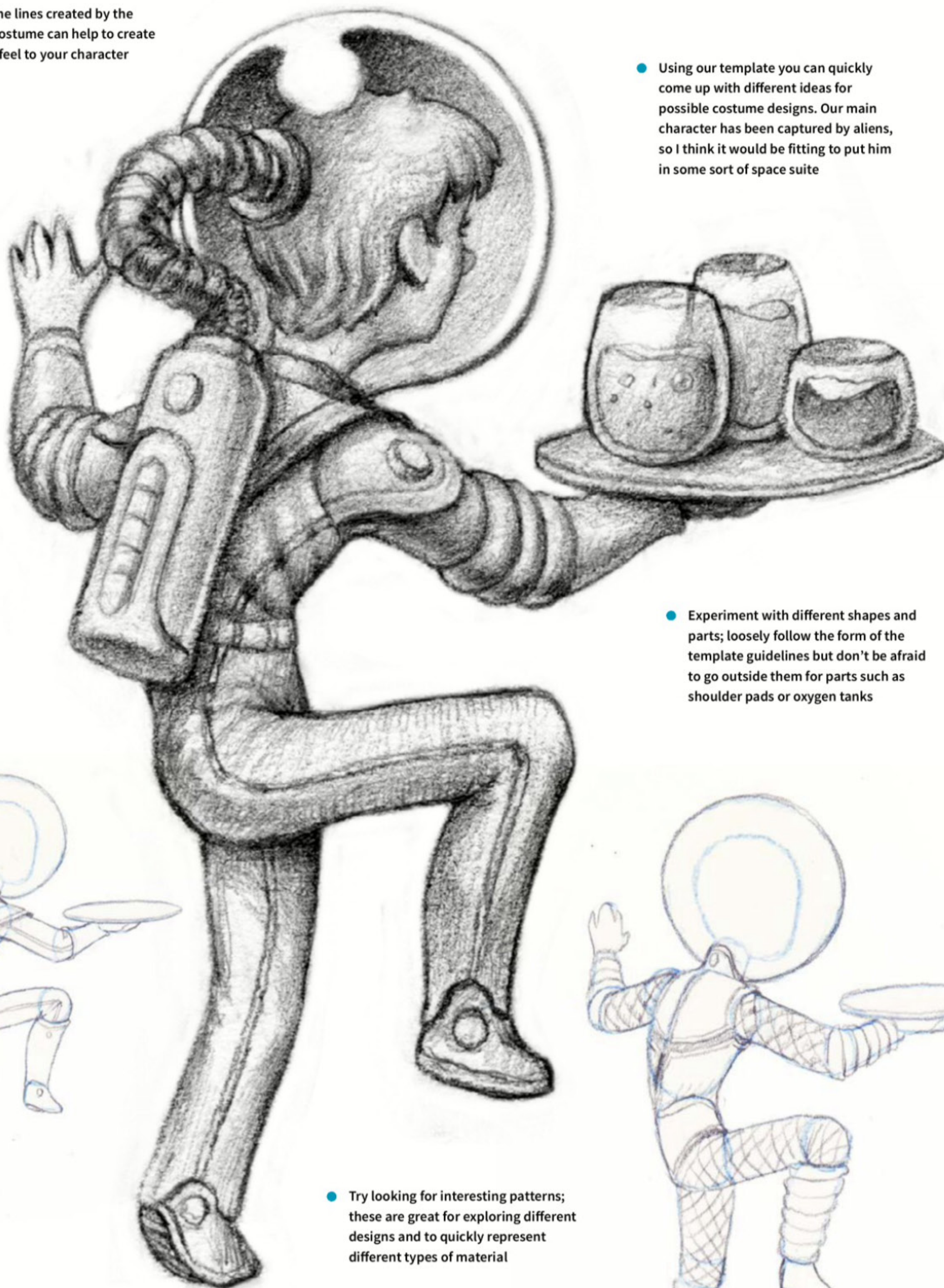
● Using our template you can quickly come up with different ideas for possible costume designs. Our main character has been captured by aliens, so I think it would be fitting to put him in some sort of space suite

● Experiment with different shapes and parts; loosely follow the form of the template guidelines but don't be afraid to go outside them for parts such as shoulder pads or oxygen tanks

● Try looking for interesting patterns; these are great for exploring different designs and to quickly represent different types of material

● Breaking up the curved lines of the template gives the impression of looser clothing, in contrast to a more skin-tight suit

● Adding an oxygen tank helps with the narrative, this way we know that the character is in a strange place possibly on a world where he can't breathe without it, therefore accentuating the alien theme
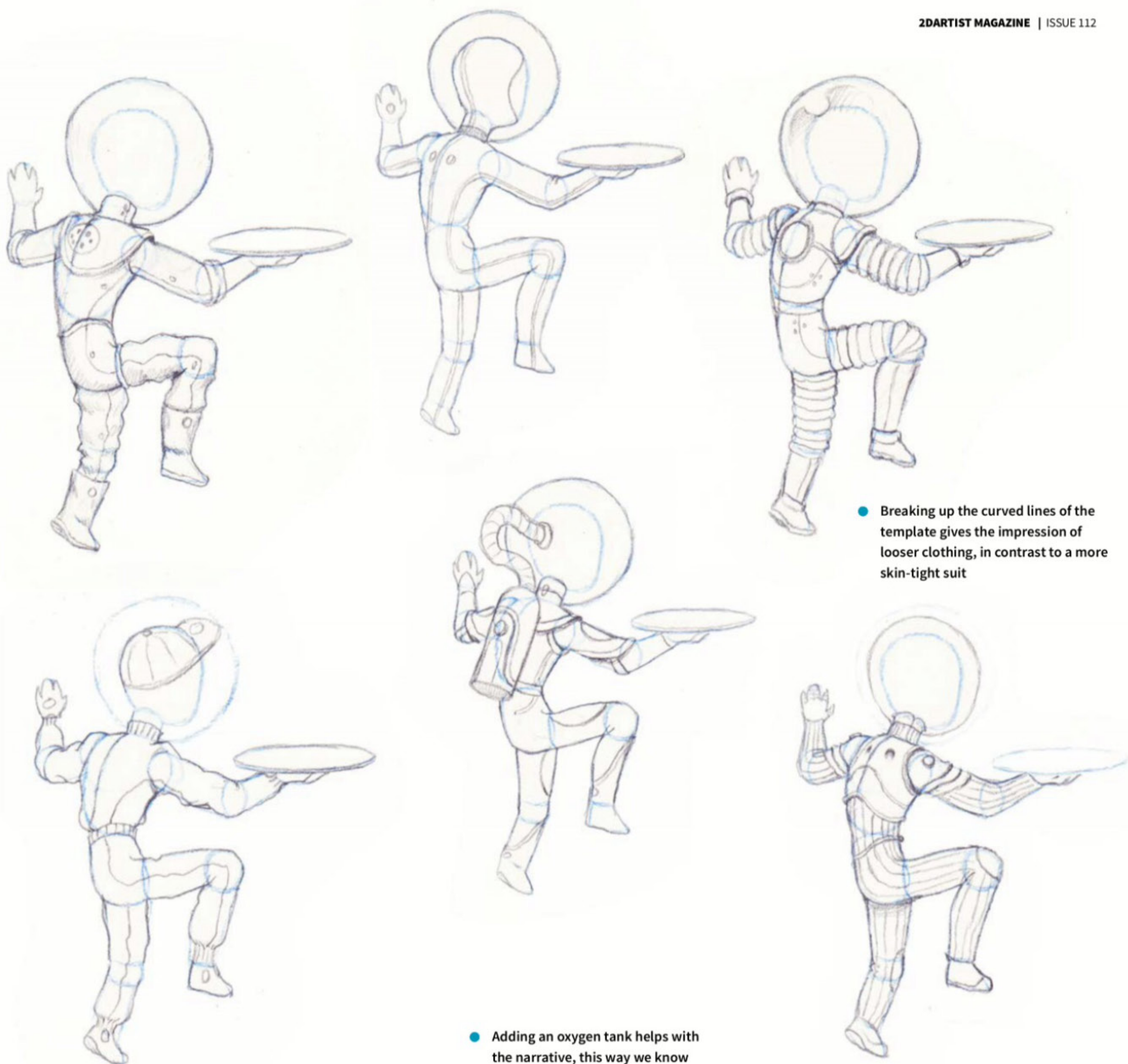
● Keep your lines light and don't press down too hard on your pencil, you might still want to be able to erase something later on

01

● When working traditionally it's a good idea to have a few kinds of erasers lying around such as a kneaded eraser and a gum eraser which is perfect to get rid of unused pencil lines

02

● Build up form by placing small marks instead of shading everything perfect at once. It's good to get a general view of how things might look before diving in

03

01 Building up the design: Using the template guideline from the pose

section, I begin constructing lines on top of them using a blue pencil. This helps me to draw circles along the template respective of their perspective, to give them a feeling of 3D. Drawing with the blue pencil (or any color really) gives you the chance to make mistakes and draw it again.

When you've decided on the right line you can draw over it with a graphite pencil and erase the blue lines. Using the exploration sketches, I combine parts that I like about them into a final design. I pick the parts that fit best with the characters personality. I want to have a space suit that at the same time could pass as somewhat normal clothing.

02 The importance of outlines: Now I erase all of the blue lines so that I'm left

with my final design in outlines. Knowing and figuring out your design up front is crucial to any illustration, especially when working traditionally. When working digitally you can easily throw around layers and erase things to start again, but when working traditionally and figuring out at the end of your illustration that something just isn't working, or isn't placed right in the composition, you often have to restart from scratch. Save yourself some time and try to get your outlines right from the get go.

03 Start to shade: It's time to add some shading to the character. I focus on the

general areas first, shading them according to the light source behind the character. If you aren't sure how to place the shadows, go back to the template and experiment with shading the simple
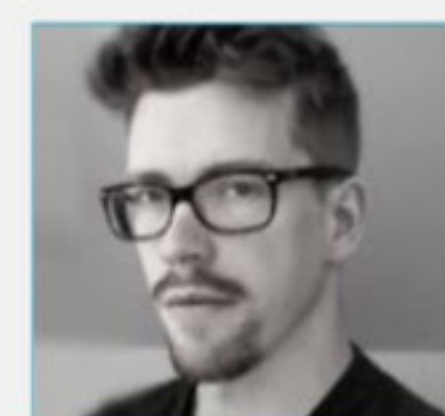
● Try to avoid small uncertain mark-making with your pencil, the final drawing needs to have smooth lines that feel like they belong together
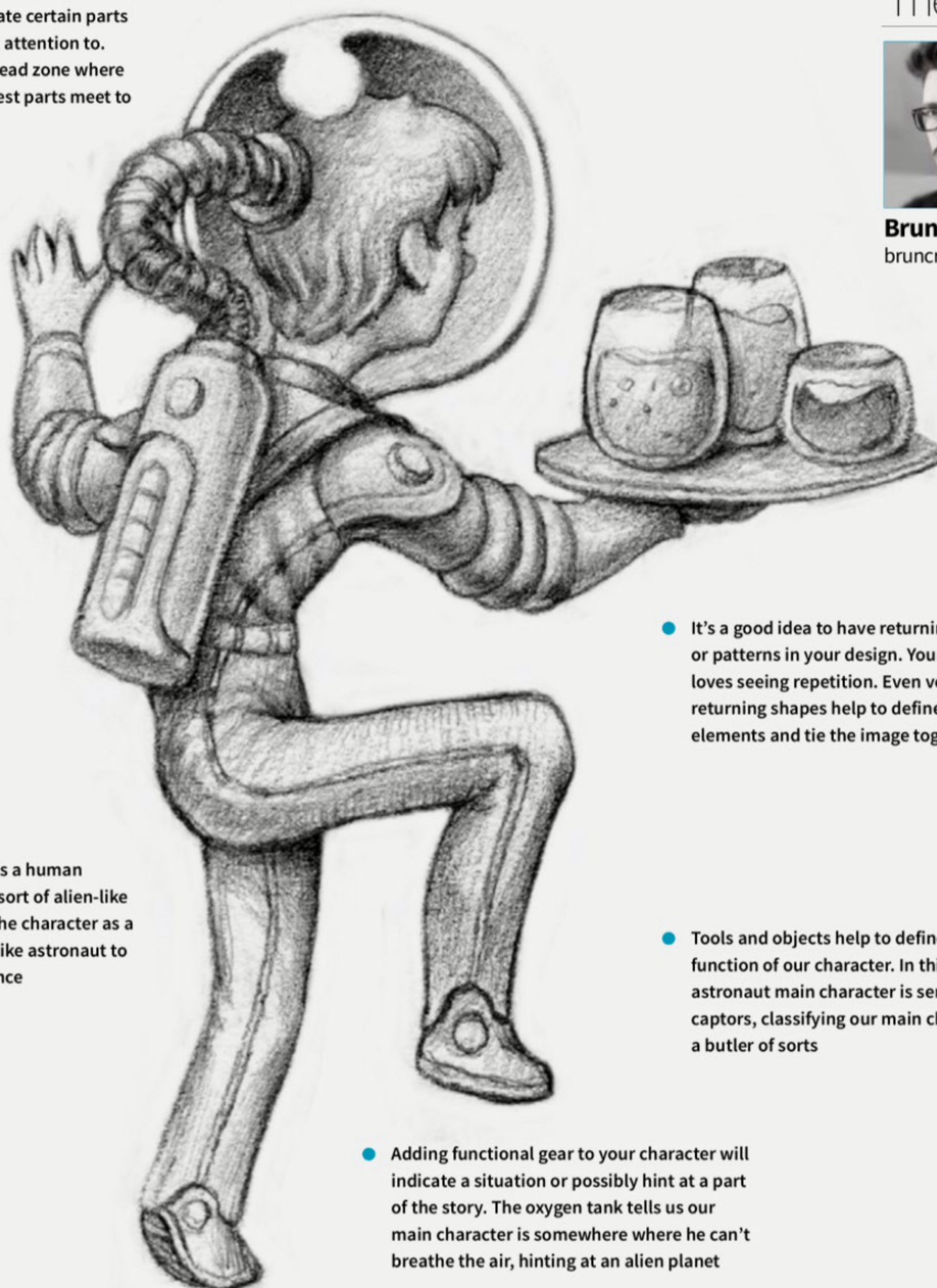

04

The Artist

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● When shading consider the contrast of your drawing. Accentuate certain parts that you want to direct attention to. As I did here with the head zone where the brightest and darkest parts meet to attract the eye

● It's a good idea to have returning elements or patterns in your design. Your eye loves seeing repetition. Even very simple returning shapes help to define certain elements and tie the image together

● Our main character is a human kidnapped by some sort of alien-like creature. I imagine the character as a young almost child-like astronaut to bring out his innocence

● Tools and objects help to define the function of our character. In this case our astronaut main character is serving their captors, classifying our main character as a butler of sorts

● Adding functional gear to your character will indicate a situation or possibly hint at a part of the story. The oxygen tank tells us our main character is somewhere where he can't breathe the air, hinting at an alien planet

05

forms. When it comes to the actual shading on the final character, I often simplify the shadow zones according to the primitive shapes.

04 **Keep at it:** While shading keep in mind what material you're dealing with. For the glass helmet and the oxygen tank I leave small areas unshaded by their outlines where the reflected light would be, this suggests to the viewer that it's made of a shiny material such as glass or metal. I also add some reflective light (unshaded areas) to certain parts of the cloth such as the arms. Notice how the transition between the shading from reflected light to the shadow is much smoother, almost gradient like, this further helps to translate the material in our

drawing. In contrast to the helmet and oxygen we can see how this is made of a different material.

05 **Final details :** I now finish up my drawing by accentuating certain parts of the design and shading. I make certain parts of the design stand out more by defining their silhouette with a darker line, such as the shoulder plates and the sleeve on his right hand. I darken the places where different parts are about to touch, because light is less likely to reach these areas. I continue building up my shading by adding layer on layer of subtle pencil lines, adding creases along the way and defining some cast shadows such as on his leg and the hand underneath the plateau. ●

⚡ **PRO TIP**
Don't go to the dark side just yet!

I often see people go very dark early on with their sketches. It's good to remember that you can always go darker but it's a lot more difficult to go lighter again when trying to erase a line that's been put down too hard or too dark. So build up layers of shading first to check that your values are working.

"These tutorials not only provide interesting exercises for the beginner to help build a strong foundation for drawing and painting, but also provide important insights into the mindset of a concept artist. Very useful and inspiring!"

Lois Van Baarle (aka Loish)

Digital concept artist & animator | loish.net

beginner's guide to digital painting in Photoshop:

characters

Following on from the highly successful *Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Photoshop*, this latest title explores the popular techniques used in character design.

Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting: Characters is a comprehensive guide for artists wishing to create convincing and detailed characters. It features established artists such as Charlie Bowater (concept artist at Atomhawk) and Derek Stenning (freelance concept artist and illustrator, with clients including Marvel Entertainment and Nintendo) who share their industry experiences by covering such aspects as posing characters, choosing the correct costumes, conveying emotions, and creating suitable moods. Comprehensive step-by-step instructions – plus a quick tips section demonstrating how to paint elements that are integral to character design and a glossary covering essential Photoshop tools – make this an invaluable resource for those looking to learn new skills, as well as those pursuing the next level.

The Artist

Mikhail Rakhmatullin

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Software Used:
Photoshop

Mikhail Rakhmatullin
is a freelance concept
artist from Russia, and
has worked in the game
industry for about six years.

Render a stone robot

Discover the process Mikhail Rakhmatullin used to create his character concept
Forest Guardian. From the initial sketches and pose, to texturing and final
details, Mikhail shares top tips to help you create a dynamic character ▶

Mikhail Rakhmatullin reveals the techniques behind his textured image...

In this tutorial I am going to tell you about the creative workflow that I have been using for creating characters, which streamlines the production of concepts step-by-step and separates work into topics such as shape, color, and light, which are essential to the process. It is very difficult to reflect upon these things at the same time, but when you are working on just one of them separately, it is easier and quicker.

01 **First sketches:** This character is a mini-boss that has been protecting ancient ruins for centuries. He is a stone golem, with a slight robotic aesthetic. I like Japanese games and anime very much, that is why I decided to create a style that was *Dark Souls* meets *Laputa*.

Sketching is the most important part of the work; it shows your idea of the character and at this stage you can already see if it will work or not. It's good to do a few variations to choose from; the ones that don't work this time may still come in handy in the future. In this case I chose the central one because I liked the contrast between the rectangular heavy head and thin, long arms and legs.

02 **Refining the sketch:** I decided to make the pose more dynamic. I found it interesting to make the character look bulky and heavy, but at the same time fast and active. Speed and agility is not the thing you are expecting from a gigantic stone golem; therefore I decided that it would add some originality to him. I have come to know the particulars of the functionality of hands; the forest guard is a serious guy and his hands shouldn't swing at a loose end, so I equipped him with everything I ever could. ▶
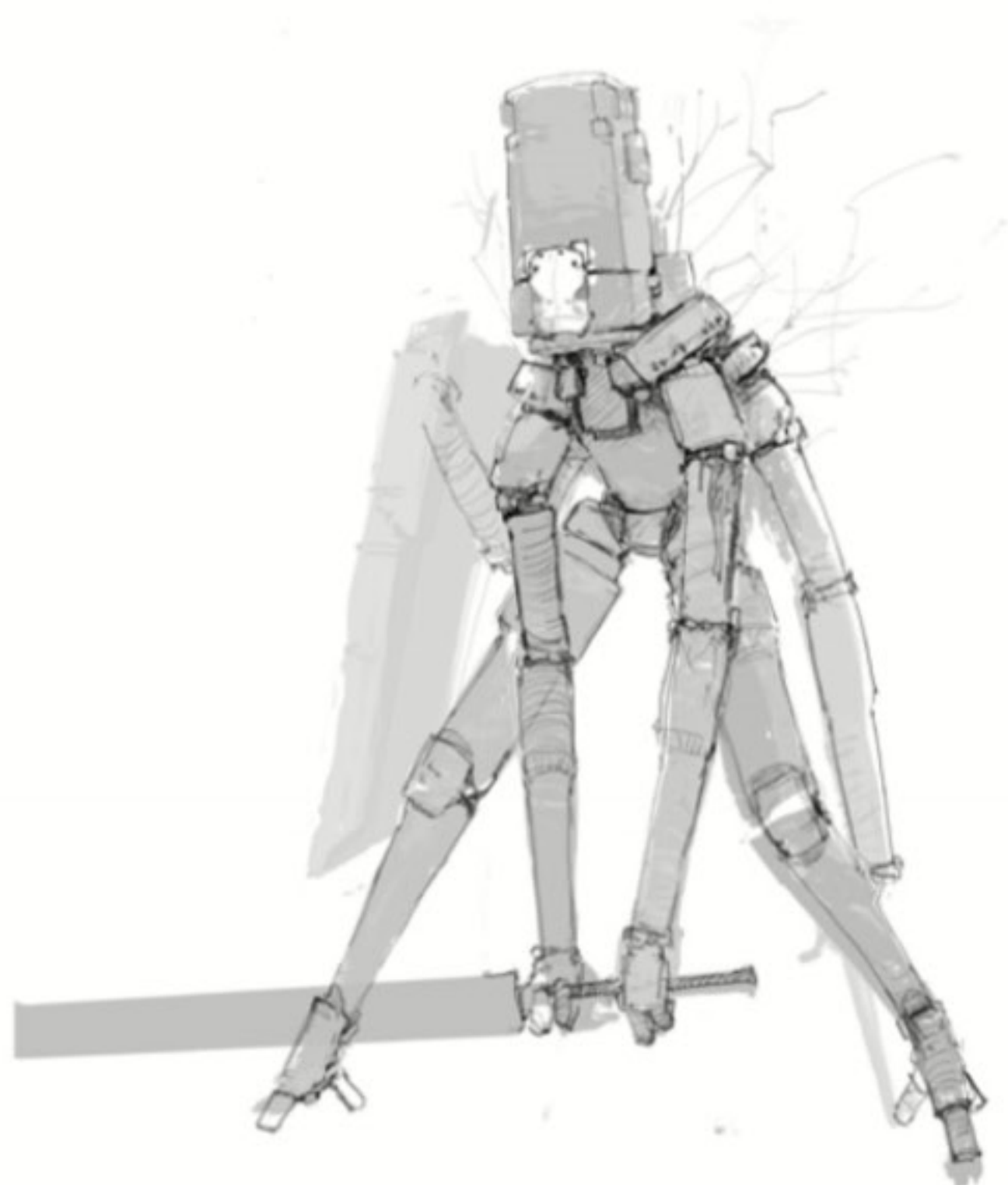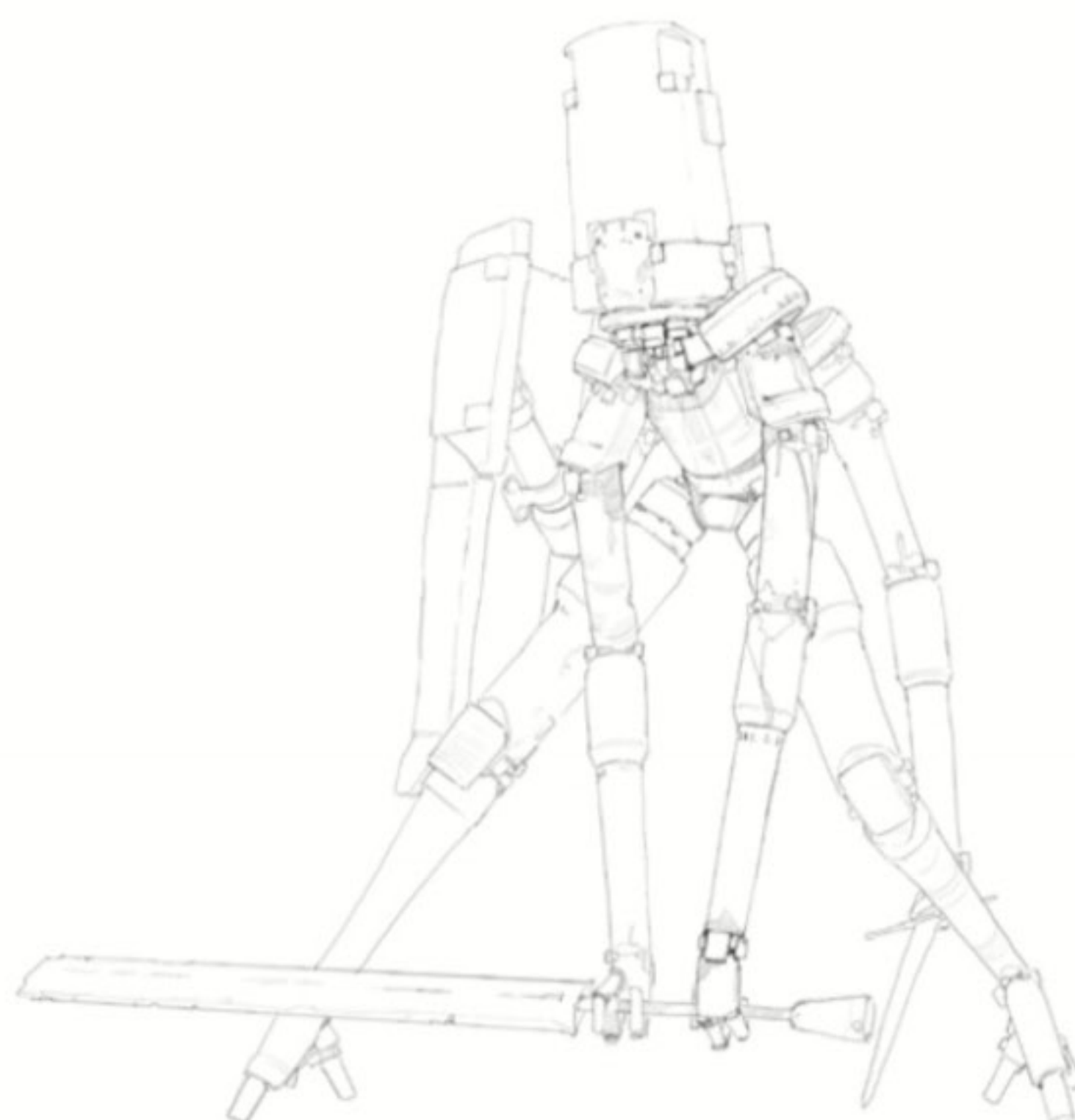
01 Sketching is good, the more ideas you draw at this stage, the better

02 Pose is a very important thing for the character; it transmits his personality and temperament

01

02

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04

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03 Line art #1: Now the concept was realized it was time to lay down the line art. The method was classic – lower the opacity of the layer and sketch in the lines above. Accuracy of the line was not important now, but the reproduction of the shape was. It was also necessary to think of the design; to determine the shape pattern, arrangement of joints, and to imagine how the character would move as a whole. The golem started to look like a stone robot, but I decided that it was the look I wanted to achieve.

04 Line art #2: In this step I dropped the layer opacity again and drew more accurate lines, specifying all the details. At this point I finalized the design; I already knew where the focal point was, where to put the accent, where the charge zone would be, and where I had to leave a place for the composition to breathe. It quickened the workflow incredibly, making you think over the whole design at an early stage

of producing the concept, and minimizing the possibility of getting stuck on some detail in the final stages.

05 Scene setup: In this step I clipped the silhouette of the character with the Lasso tool. Usually I do not use the Magic Wand tool for these goals, as the result can be very unpredictable and inaccurate. Accuracy is key at this stage. We also want to have the overlay layers separated out, and it is also desirable to split the concept into materials, with each material on a certain layer in order to have the opportunity of quickly selecting certain areas. In this case my layers were arranged into 'first hands', 'second hands', 'branches', 'mask', and 'black slime'.

06 Diffuse color: It was now time to decide which color would be used; it was the most important decision at this stage. It was the most difficult and responsible question for me, after the stage of sketching. I wanted to achieve

an aggressive gamma; that's why I stopped with the red moss. Usually, I just put color spots in a Normal layer which is linked to the silhouette, but this time I decided I wanted to achieve a more photorealistic result, and overwhelmed the silhouette with photo-textures. This was the pure diffuse color, without shadows and ambient occlusion (which I would add later). ▶

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03 Use lines to reproduce the base shapes

04 One hour spent on line art will save you five hours on the render stage

05 Accuracy and patience is the motto of this stage. Technical work is very boring, but necessary

06 Color spots combination – an important method to create mood and atmosphere
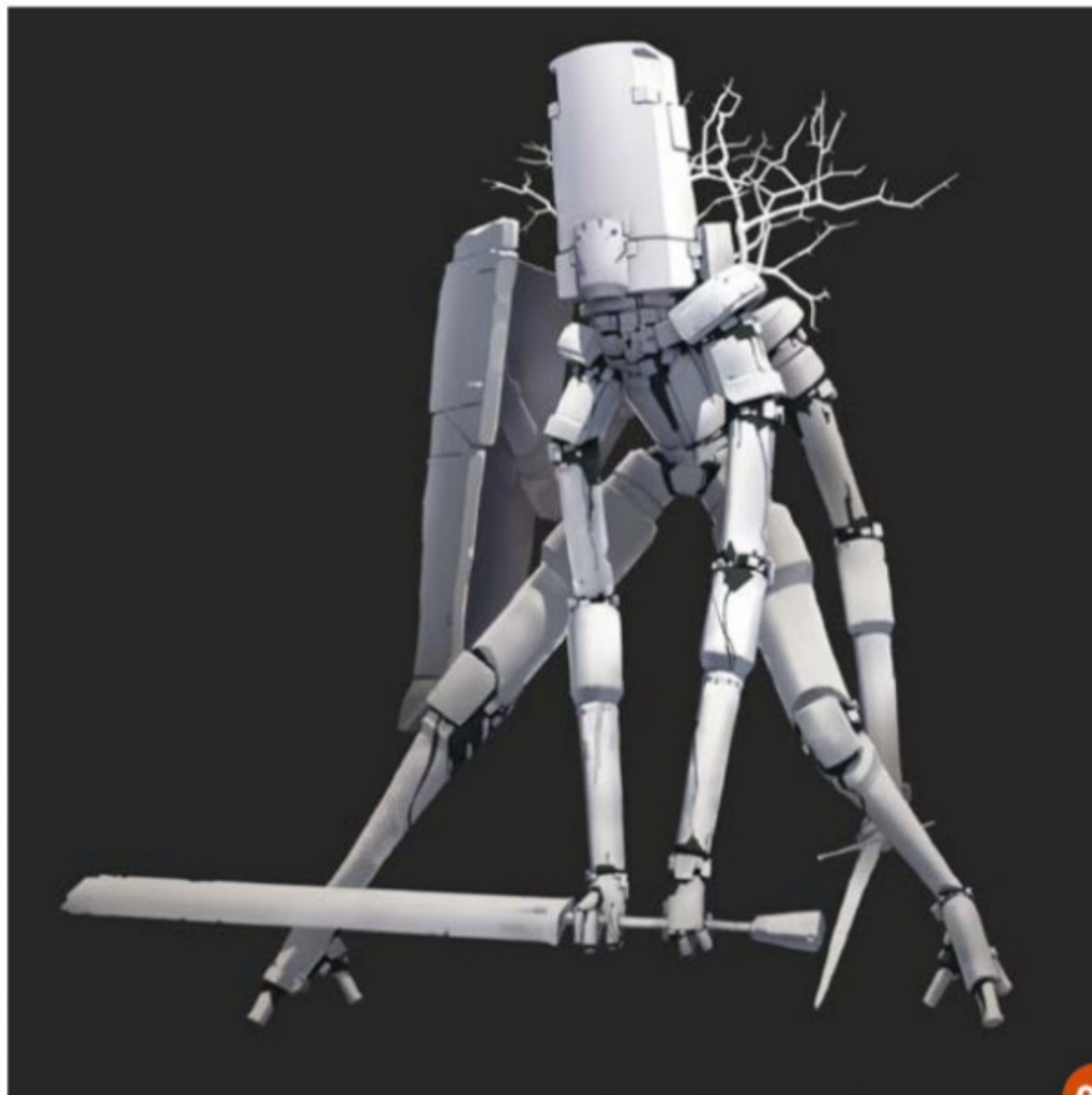
07 **Shadows and ambient occlusion:** At this stage I started the render process. Usually I begin with making shadows. I hide the color layer and draw shadows on the white silhouette with a gray color in Multiply mode. It is easier and faster to work with chiaroscuro separately, without thinking of the color. As for the angle of the light, I chose a top-right light, because it was easy to build and it allowed me to focus my attention on the head and the shoulders, making a sufficient level of contrast. After drop shadows, I added one more layer in Multiply, where I drew the ambient occlusion and also added definition to the depth by darkening distant shapes.

08 **Putting it all together:** It was high time to bring everything together. Here I turned on the color layer and gave the color shade to the Multiply layers via Hue/Saturation, also tuning up the brightness a bit. Usually after this step I merge all the layers except the background, because for me, the fewer layers we have the more convenient the work becomes. It's hard to believe, taking into account my pipeline, but I really think so!

09 **Rendering:** Usually the quality which we get after the assembling is not enough, and extra rendering is necessary, and it is the thing which takes the most time. I added general noise in some places, adding details in other places, and cleaning up the color – all these things were necessary. Among other matters, at this stage I added extra metal material to my character, because I wanted to dilute the matte surfaces with slight shiny accents.

10 **Finalizing:** In this step I concentrated on elaborating the details of some of the aspects. I tuned up the colors using the Color Balance adjustment option. Finalization is a difficult process, because you are already tired of your image and just want to put them into production and close your eyes to unfinished stuff. However, it's this step that adds gloss and completes the look of the final image. The whole process for this particular piece took about 18 hours of work to complete. ●

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07 Click on the necessary layer with Ctrl to get the quick selection

08 Finally it's time to merge all the layers…

09 The rendering process. Time to paint; fix mistakes and begin to finalize the picture here

2015

Project
KINGDOMS

The Artist

Mikhail Rakhmatullin
artstation.com/artist/
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10

The Artist

David Habben
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David Habben is an illustrator and fine artist based in Salt Lake City, Utah. He has provided illustrations, storyboards, and concept art for a wide variety of clients in publishing and advertising.

Sketching from the Imagination: Fantasy

David Habben

David Habben shares his stunning fantasy sketches, along with his inspirations and techniques with this sneak-peek look inside the pages of *Sketching from the Imagination: Fantasy* ▶

Sketchbooks are my artistic addiction, my personal diary, my outlet and my science lab. In them I explore concepts, style and techniques before I have the chance to really think about them. They house my spontaneous impulses and my recurrent dreams. Working for clients and employers involves structure and deadlines, meetings and feedback, but in my sketchbook, there are no limits.

My sketchbooks are, at least to me, a mess. For every page of detailed line work, there's another page washed with ink, watercolor, or the excess acrylic paint from another project. There's no direct progress through the books because I'll jump back and forth through the pages, revisiting earlier drawings, adding color or detail. Its jazz improvisation one day, power chords the next – I love every minute of it.

Over the past year, I've become an avid fan of ballpoint pens, and they've now become a constant tool in my more recent sketchbook work. It's amazing to me what can be achieved with the right combination of pen and paper, even when the pen is something as generic as a biro.

They also allow me to create almost pencil-like shading and line quality while retaining the durability of ink. This is extremely helpful during the painting process, when I often use watercolor pencils (aquarelles). During this process the drawings and paper tend to take a lot of abuse. Using ink ensures that I can retain the drawing even when it's been soaked in a wash. Sketchbook durability is paramount. ▶

● Scanning my drawings and painting them digitally allows me to experiment without destroying the original, which I'll admit, has happened – a lot

● This work is still in progress. Sometimes the best step I can take with my work is to let it sit for a few days and then dive back in

"Learning to use something that you can't erase is great practice and has led me to many discoveries that I wouldn't have found if I could 'undo' my work"

Inspiration and ideas

Inspiration is all about keeping your mind and heart open. We're surrounded by audio and visual overload all the time and there's no way to escape it. However, we can learn how to process all that information into new thoughts and ideas. We can also take more initiative in what we see and hear. I'm always inspired by great literature, interesting music and, of course, the great people in my life.

Materials

For my sketchbooks, I love a good heavyweight paper that can stand up to a lot of media. Sometimes I'll build my own books to ensure I get the paper I want. I keep a two-sided kit with me for all of my sketching supplies. One side has my watercolor pencils and traditional graphite pencils. I also keep a small travel paintbrush and a small lid for water when I use the watercolor pencils. On the other side, I keep a variety of pens, i.e. ballpoints, fine liners, a gray marker for shading and a blender marker as well.

Sketching techniques

I don't know if I have a specific technique for my sketchbooks, but one lesson I learned early on from an inspiring teacher is to use permanent media as much as possible. Pens, markers, paint, and so on. Learning to use something that you can't erase is great practice and has led me to many discoveries that I wouldn't have found if I could 'undo' my work. There's a great level of confidence to be found as you learn to either get it right the first time or adapt to whatever is on the page. Let go of your fear and get some ink on that page! ●

● It's important for me to have a durable sketchbook because of all the experimentation I like to do. This drawing includes ballpoint pen, aquarelle, and gel pen

● **Above:** This sketch is about growing up and the idea of boys becoming men with all the battles, temptations, and distractions they must face

Left: Simple people receiving divine or spiritual guidance is a favorite topic of mine. It is a theme I love to revisit in a variety of ways, each time approaching the creature in a new, yet familiar way

● Without fail, if I draw a character
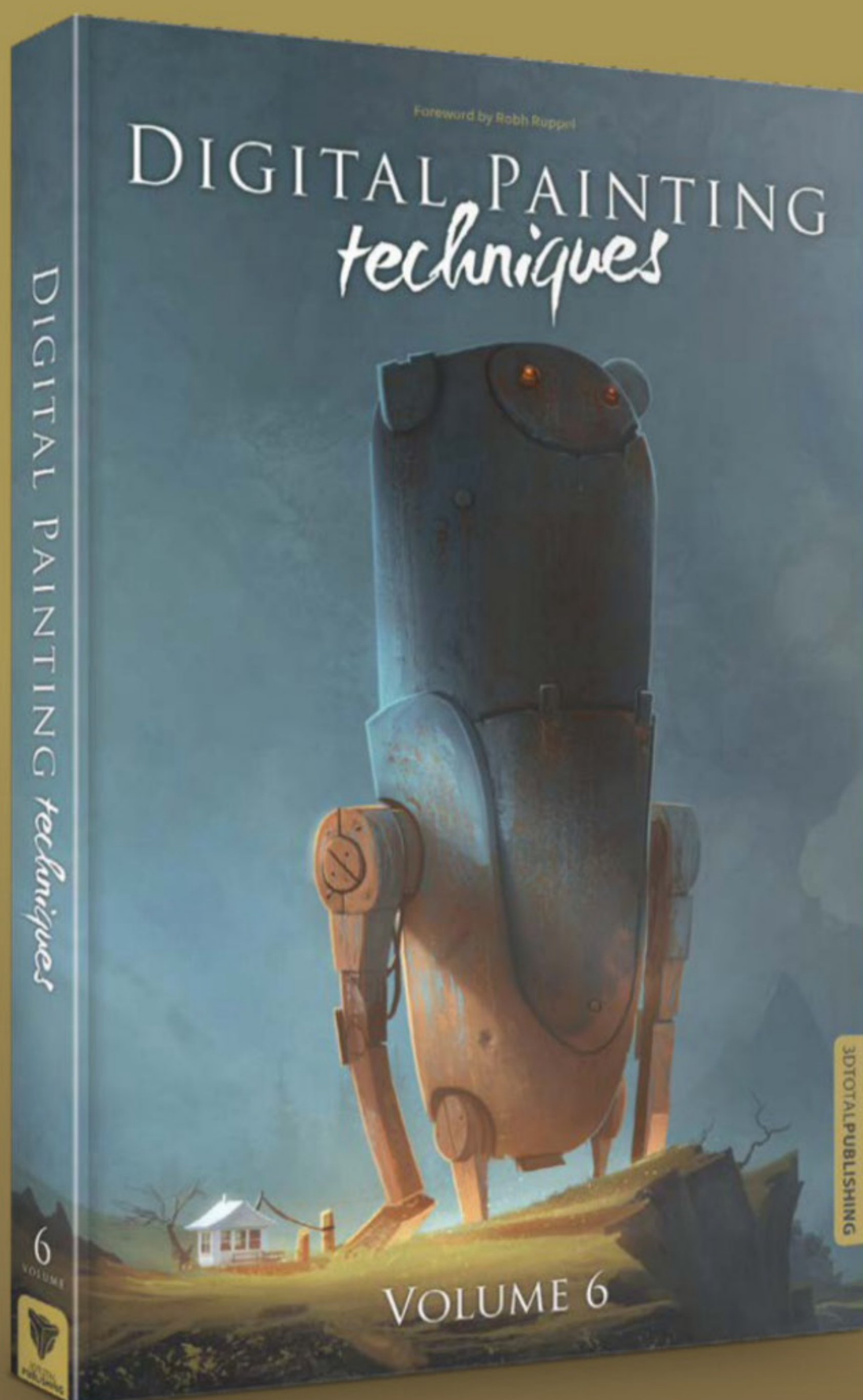he is really happy with, part of it
will go off the page

The Artist

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habbenink.com

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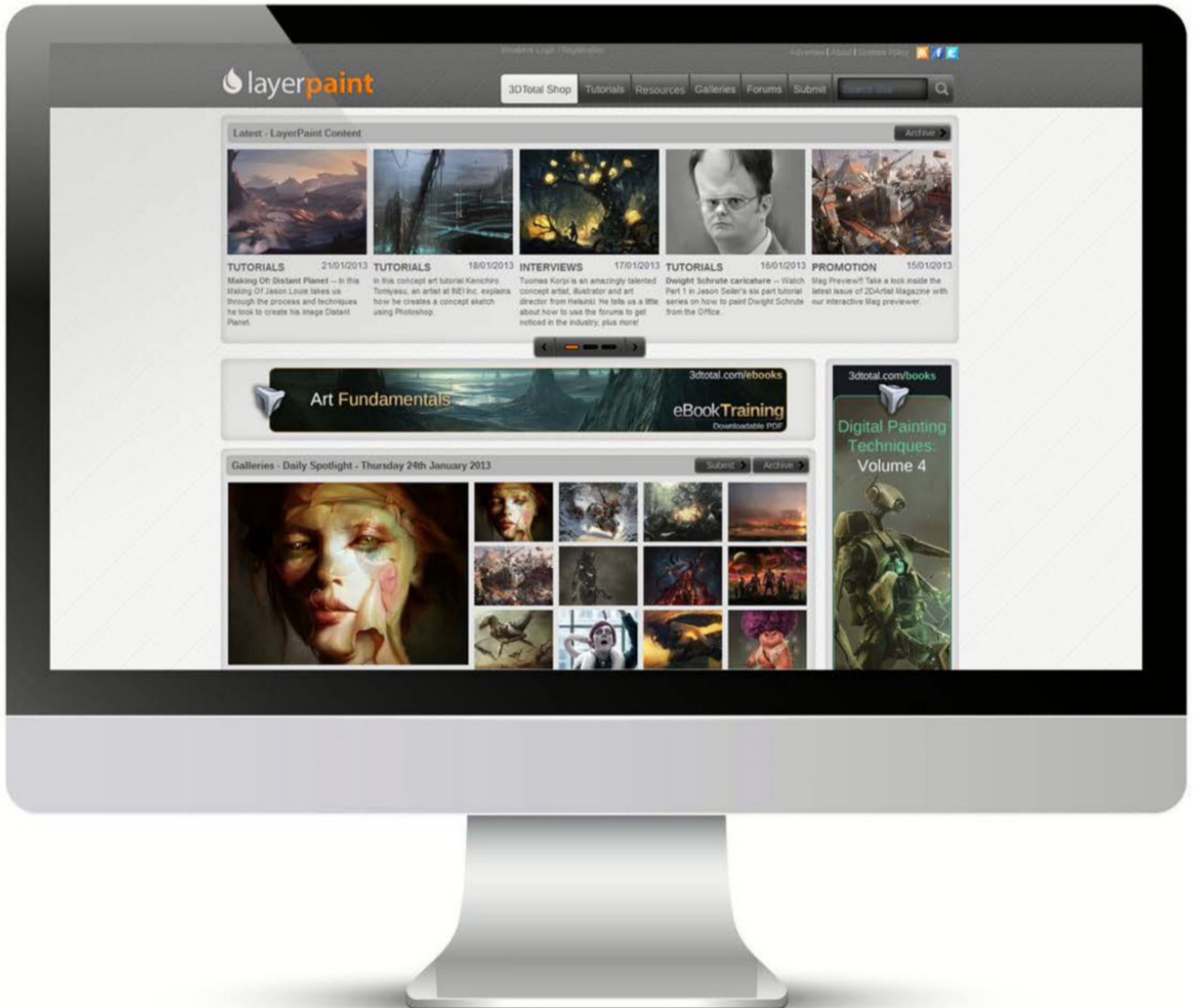288 FULL COLOUR PAGES
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